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MANKIND

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETIES OF AUSTRALIA

Vol. V, No. 6. October, 1958

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:

Australia: Anthropology. **Elkin**

Anthropology in Australia: One Chapter.[1] *By A. P. Elkin, Emeritus Professor of the University of Sydney.*

One Chapter: Which Chapter? For presumably there are others. I have spoken elsewhere about "Writings on the Aborigines since 1788".[2] For this occasion, I have accepted the suggestion made by the Editor of *Mankind*, to speak about the development of Anthropology in Australia, more particularly in the past thirty years or so, with which I am personally familiar. To do this, however, I must first picture in broad sweep the growth of interest in, and knowledge of, the anthropology of the Aborigines from 1788 onwards.

A Phase of Casual or Incidental Anthropology.

Up to the 1870's there was a phase of what can be called casual or incidental anthropology. It began with the fleeting observations recorded by Dampier and Cook, but from 1788 there appeared at an increasing rate chapters in books, articles in Journals, and in time whole books on the Aborigines. The writers were of different types and professions, and looked at the natives from varying points of view:

(i) Administrative officials, including some early Governors and later on Protectors and Guardians of Aborigines, were principally concerned with the interaction of settlers and Aborigines.

(ii) Explorers on land, having always to push on, could do little more than note some particulars of material culture and habitations; but they did record the Aborigines' reactions to their coming "out of the blue". We think of J. Oxley, T. L. Mitchell, J. Eyre, G. Grey, C. Sturt, L. Leichhardt and others. The coastal surveyors, however, like M. Flinders, P. P. King and J. L. Stokes, and naturalists with them, for example, J. B. Jukes and J. MacGillivray, with ships as bases could, and did, in some cases take the opportunity to record Aboriginal word lists, to describe material objects and paintings, and to make other observations.

(iii) A few escaped or lost convicts and shipwrecked travellers left records of their life with Aborigines, which at least are based on first-hand experience. Such were Buckley, Pamphlet, Finnegan and Davies, and Murrells.

[1] Presidential Address to the Anthropological Society of New South Wales, March 25, 1958.

[2] A Lecture delivered in Sydney on October 8, 1957, under the auspices of the Australian Book Council.

(iv) Another group comprised settlers, sojourners and travellers. The 1840's was a particularly rich period for books by such persons, in which sections or chapters were devoted to Aboriginal matters. R. Howitt, G. B. Wilkinson, G. F. Angas, C. Hodgkinson and J. Backhouse are but a few of this decade, while R. Dawson stands out for the preceding decade. But no period, not even the present, is without books and articles by writers in this category. Many of them, however, have added little to our knowledge of the Aborigines, although they have revealed a very deplorable attitude towards the latter. This same group includes quite a number who wrote booklets or articles for scientific Journals on Aboriginal customs, beliefs and languages, for example, G. F. Moore, Scott Nind and later, E. Palmer.

(v) A long and honoured line of missionary writers on the same subjects, a line which has continued unbroken up to this day, began with the linguistic work of L. E. Threlkeld in 1826. G. Taplin, R. Salvado, W. Ridley, Mrs. J. Smith and J. B. Gribble are other names which come readily to mind from that far-off period.

(vi) And finally, a few naturalists, such as P. E. Strzlecki, in addition to those on survey ships, paid some attention to the Aborigines as well as to geology, zoology, or whatever was their main interest. This type of observer, however, made more valuable contributions later, particular in the 1890's, through the writings of R. Semon, K. Dahl and C. Lumholz.

A definite set of themes crystallizes out of the writings of these varying types of observers : (i) What are the Aborigines like physically, and what is their relation to other peoples ? (ii) What do they do ? How do they live ? What do they possess ? (iii) What is their form of government ? Have they chiefs ? Tribes ? Private property ? How do they arrange marriages ? (iv) Do they believe in a Supreme Being ? (v) What is their language ? And (vi) what is their intelligence and psychological endowment generally ? Can they be civilized and become Christian ?

These were the questions and themes of interest during our first century of contact with the Aborigines. Put in different ways, they are the questions of later decades and also of today. But each period poses and answers them in its own fashion.

A Compiling and Collating Phase.

The first phase overlapped with another which was evident from the late 1870's through to the end of the century. Its distinguishing feature was the compilation and collating, according to the compiler's plan, of information on Aboriginal customs, beliefs and languages. This was obtained by questionnaires and correspondence from many scores of individuals in all the Australian Colonies, and also by using, or by republishing in full, articles and booklets of an earlier date. To gather all the material possible was felt to be a matter of urgency because the breakdown of the indigenous culture and the decrease of the native population appeared to be rapid. These compilers were Brough Smyth (1878), J. D. Woods (1879), G. Taplin (1879), E. M. Curr (1886), J. Fraser (1892), and T. Worsnop (1897). But they were not merely collators and editors ; they contributed their own views, based on the material which they had obtained. Further, Taplin, Curr and Fraser had gathered some of their information at first hand. A. W. Howitt and R. H. Mathews, who will be referred to again, also used the method of inquiry by correspondence, but as an addition to much field-research and as a step towards interpretation.

The Development of Systematic Research

The period from the 1870's to the outbreak of World War I, which overlapped the preceding phase, saw the development of a systematic and " laboratory " approach in field observation. This came about through the influence of anthropologists and theories abroad. J. D. Lang ushered in this phase in the 1860's, bringing the conclusions of Blumenbach and Prichard to a study of the Aborigines. But more important was Lorimer Fison's arrival in Australia from Fiji. He had been much influenced by the American, L. H. Morgan, to whose great work, *Systems of Consanguinity*, he had contributed material. Fison in turn influenced and collaborated with A. W. Howitt of Victoria. They published in 1880 a combined work, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, the first theoretical study of Aboriginal social organization. Supporting Morgan's theories of the development of marriage through a " group " phase, and also his ideas regarding kinship and descent, these authors vigorously attacked Bachofen, McLennan and Lubbock. It was an appreciation of the classificatory system of kinship and a theory of the development of marriage which enabled Fison and Howitt to handle the material on social organization in South-east Australia. Further, inspired by these theoretical considerations, Howitt, in time spared from his duties as mining warden and magistrate, carried out planned projects of field-work, and also obtained information by correspondence. The results were published in his *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, 1904.

Following on the footsteps of these two pioneers of the method of systematic inquiry directed by theory, came W. Baldwin Spencer in 1887 to teach Zoology in the University of Melbourne, but also ready to practise the anthropology he had learnt from E. B. Tylor at Oxford, to fall under the magic of James G. Frazer (of *The Golden Bough* and *Totemism and Exogamy*), and to recognize the worth of Fison and Howitt. His first expedition into central Australia and the Northern Territory was in 1894, the last in 1926. The research he did in collaboration with F. J. Gillen was published in two books which have become classics and which exerted a great influence during the first three decades of this century on anthropological theory, particularly with reference to religion and to some aspects of social organization. *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* appeared in 1899 and *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* in 1904, to be followed in 1914 by *The Native Tribes of the Northern Territory*, written by Spencer alone. An important aspect of Spencer's contribution is that taking time off from Zoology, he carried out the first especially organized and financed field research projects in anthropology in Australia.

In the 1890's, W. E. Roth, a fellow student with Spencer at Oxford, came to Queensland where he was Protector of Aborigines and Medical Officer. He also turned his attention to anthropology and in 1897 published *Ethnological Studies of the Aborigines of North-West-Central Queensland*, and later on a number of Ethnological Bulletins on the Aborigines of Cape York Peninsula. Most of his publications are very Government report-like in presentation.

Mrs. Langloh Parker cannot be omitted even from a brief summary, for the theorists of the following three decades never failed to use her material. Influenced and encouraged by Andrew Lang with his interest in totemism, " high gods " and other subjects, she produced two delightful little books of *Australian Legendary Tales* (1897 and 1898), and in 1905 her equally pleasant, but more important, *The Euahlayi Tribe*, the tribe on the pastoral property in the north west of New South Wales, where she lived.

Probably the most devoted and persistent spare-time worker in the anthropological field throughout this period was R. H. Mathews, a licensed surveyor in New South Wales. His field observations began in the 1870's and his writings covered two decades, 1890 to 1910. His interests were languages, initiation rites, art and especially social organization. By his own field inquiries and with the help of correspondents from most parts of Australia, he sought to record systematically all the material he could obtain under these heads. His results are not always as complete and detailed as we would wish, but without his marathon effort of half a lifetime, the gaps in our anthropological knowledge of the Aborigines would be very much greater than they are. He only just recovered the information in some regions before it was too late. For other regions, his material is useful as a starting point or for comparison. His most important contribution was to our understanding of Aboriginal social organization, particularly with regard to moieties, matrilineal descent cycles, sections, clans and basic marriage rules. His map of the distribution of types of social organization, published in 1900, showed a clear over-all grasp of the subject.

Pastor C. Strehlow, a missionary at Hermannsburg amongst the western Aranda and neighbouring Loritja groups, 1892–1922, published from 1910 to 1914 and in 1921 a series of articles in German on the mythology, folklore and social organization of those tribes (*Die Aranda—und Loritja—Stamme in Zentral Australien*). This work, based on an adequate knowledge of the languages, is a valuable addition to Spencer and Gillen's *Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899), for their field work was mainly with the central and eastern Arunta (Aranda).

Mention must be made of the Reverend John Mathew, a contributor to Curr's *Australian Race*, and the author of two books, *Eaglehawk and Crow*, 1899, with its hypothesis of the bi-racial origin and constitution of the Aborigines, and *Two Representative Tribes of Queensland*, 1910, a description based mainly on his early life amongst the Kabi and Wakka. Mr. Mathew lent his weight to the later movement for establishing Anthropology as an academic discipline in Australia.

Finally, in 1910 Mr. A. R. Brown, later Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, with a background training and influence of W. H. R. Rivers and E. Durkheim, came to and worked in the coastal strip of the then long-settled Gascoyne, Murchison and De Grey region of the North-West Division of Western Australia. Assisted by Mrs. D. Bates and some scanty early material, he salvaged a meagre account of the social and totemic systems of the region. But his article, "Three Tribes of Western Australia", (1913) because of its clear exposition, had much influence on kinship studies. Even more important, however, was A. R. Brown's endeavour since his graduation, to devote himself full-time to Anthropology. With the help of research grants he succeeded until the outbreak of World War I, after which he had to take other work for a few years and do anthropology in spare time.

The Growing Prestige of Anthropology in Australia

Thus there had been since 1788 a constant stream of inquiry into, and of literature on, the Aborigines. The methods of inquiry had become more and more systematic and the analysis of the material more purposeful. The theories and interpretations of ethnologists abroad, in England, America and Europe, had been influencing the field inquiry and interpretations of a thin line of spare-time investigators who made their researches more than an

incidental activity, related or unrelated to their daily work. Moreover, their activity was stimulated by the use made of their results by scholars abroad, and by the personal interest shown by the latter, especially Morgan, Tylor, Frazer, Lang and Marett.

Baldwin Spencer had shown that organized and specialized field-work was desirable, essential and rewarding. A. R. Brown had come out from England to do a specific piece of field research, and Klaatsch and Eylmann had come from Germany on similar missions. Mr. G. C. Wheeler, an associate of W. H. R. Rivers and A. N. Hocart, had under the guidance of Westermarck written a thesis on *The Australian Tribe* (1910), and the young B. Malinowski had written a theoretical book on *The Family among the Australian Aborigines* (1913).

Another significant event was the Cambridge Expedition to Torres Straits in 1899. W. H. R. Rivers, A. C. Haddon and C. G. Seligman, who were members of it became very interested in the Australian-Melanesian region and all three came out during the following decade for further field-work in Papua and Melanesia. Because of their local experience and of their distinguished reputations, they strongly influenced the movement for the establishment of Anthropology as a University discipline in Australia.

The ground for such development had been prepared unobtrusively, and even unintentionally, for several decades. The Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, since its foundation in 1888, had provided a Section for Anthropology, in which Howitt, Baldwin Spencer, John Mathew and R. H. Mathews, in the Aboriginal field, had taken part, and Dr. George Brown, author of *Melanesians and Polynesians*, and others contributed papers on the peoples of the islands. In addition, the several Royal Societies and Geographical Societies in Australia regarded themselves as media for the discussion and publication of anthropological material. Further, workers in the region, part-time, trained or not, were encouraged to submit their results to various anthropological journals in America and Europe as well as to the journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

The British Association Meeting, 1914.

So when Australian scientists decided to invite the British Association for the Advancement of Science to meet in Australia in 1914, Anthropology was sufficiently entrenched in the Australian scientific structure and was of sufficient interest to anthropologists in England, to ensure that the Anthropological Section of the British Association meeting in Australia would attract worthwhile men. It did. Foremost among them was the great and very distinguished Australian anatomist and anthropologist, Grafton Elliot Smith, at the time in Manchester. He gave a memorable public lecture in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney, on the influence of the burial practices of ancient Egypt. Other visiting anthropologists included Rivers, Haddon and R. R. Marett, and of the younger generation, A. R. Brown, B. Malinowski and J. Layard. Amongst the local enthusiasts were Baldwin Spencer, John Mathew, Dr. G. Brown, Dr. S. A. Smith (a brother of Elliot Smith, and an anatomist who did work on the Talgai skull), and Professors J. T. Wilson (Anatomy), A. Stuart (Physiology) and Edgeworth David (Geology). This was a very strong team. The Section aroused much interest. Through its representations, the Congress appointed a committee, which included several of these names, to see in what ways the teaching of Anthropology could be extended in the Dominions and at home. The study of the vanishing tribes of Australia was also urged.

The Pan-Pacific Science Congress, 1923

The First World War broke out while the meetings of the British Association were in progress. Other matters had to take precedence over the resolutions of Science Congresses But about the time the War ended, the Australian National Research Council was founded as Australia's link with the International Research Council. One of its early actions was to obtain Government support for holding the Second Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Australia (Melbourne and Sydney) in 1923. The first, which had been held in Hawaii in 1920, had stressed the need for anthropological research in the Pacific. It had thus set a precedent for the Second and later Congresses. Strong anthropological sessions were planned for the Australian meeting. Those taking part included Haddon and W. J. Perry from England; Perry's *Children of the Sun* had just appeared; Hubert Murray, Lieut-Governor of Papua; Peter Buck and H. D. Skinner from New Zealand; Baldwin Spencer, John Mathew and Orme Masson of Melbourne; and S. A. Smith, Edgeworth David and John Hunter (Professor of Anatomy) of Sydney.[3]

The Congress accepted the recommendations of the Anthropology Division (i) that a University Department of Anthropology should be established in Australia; (ii) that the urgently needed anthropological research in Australia and Melanesia should be carried out by the *Professor himself* and by other trained workers; (iii) that this University Department should train field-workers; and (iv) that it should also provide appropriate training in Anthropology for administrative officers from Papua and New Guinea and for missionaries. The Division also recommended that the Department of Anthropology should work in collaboration with the Departments of Anatomy, Geography, Psychology and History.

The Congress, in accordance with the constitution it was developing, entrusted the inplementation of these resolutions to the local Representative Institution, in this case, the Australian National Research Council. The latter successfully approached (i) the Commonwealth and State Governments for grants to maintain such a Department for five years; (ii) the University of Sydney to give it a home and to give its teaching work a place in the curricula; and (iii) the Rockefeller Foundation to provide funds for a programme of research to be controlled by the Research Council.

This initial success arose from the standing of the Pacific Science Congress, the status of the Australian National Research Council, and the calibre of the individual scientists concerned. Six of the latter, Haddon, Elliot Smith, B. Spencer, C. G. Seligman, David and Masson were Fellows of the Royal Society of London; and Hubert Murray was a name to conjure with. These had personal interests in the subject, while Sir Thomas Lyle, F.R.S., Sir George Knibbs and other distinguished scientists who supported it, were convinced of

[3] As an interested person, and a part-time country tutor in Anthropology for the University of Sydney Tutorial Class Department, I was present at the Sydney meeting, sitting well in the back. But going into lunch in the Refectory, which later became the Anthropology Department's lecture room, I was very kindly asked by Buck and Skinner to join them. There began a friendship with the former which lasted until his death.

Orme Masson, F.R.S. was the distinguished Professor of Chemistry at Melbourne. His support of Anthropology arose through his daughter's marriage to B. Malinowski, while the latter was engaged in his Trobriand Islands research.

As a result of talks with Haddon and Perry, I decided to go to London (University College) to do post-graduate work. I did so in 1925–27, but with no idea of becoming a professional anthropologist. I went to University College because Elliot Smith was now there, and also because I was interested in Physical Anthropology and Prehistory as well as Social Anthropology.

its value. But the most influential was Elliot Smith. While lecturing in America in 1924, he was consulted by the Rockefeller Foundation about the establishment of a Department of Anthropology in the University of Sydney and about a plan of field-work which was proposed in connection with it. As a result he came to Australia on behalf of the Foundation to discuss the project with the Commonwealth Government and the University. The assurances which he received from the Prime Minister (Mr. S. M. Bruce), the University and the Research Council were satisfactory, with the result that the Rockefeller Foundation made a very liberal grant of A£30,000. Elliot Smith was also concerned in the extension of the Foundation's plan of grants for research which would allow these to include Anthropology. At a Conference between the Foundation's Secretary, H. E. Gregory (the founder of the Pacific Science Congresses) and himself, the term Human Biology emerged, which was interpreted to include Anthropology, and therefore could cover the proposed research in the Australian-Melanesian region.[4]

Thus, although the Department of Anthropology has functioned in the academic structure of the University almost wholly within the Faculty of Arts,[5] its establishment was the work of a Congress which was concerned almost solely with natural sciences, and of a Research Council whose members were physical and biological scientists. This fact has determined to a large extent my own extra-Departmental activities. My associations have been mainly with these scientists in the Australian National Research Council, the Royal Society of New South Wales, and the Pacific Science Association.[6]

The First Department of Anthropology in Australia

The Department of Anthropology in the University of Sydney was founded in 1925. It had been preceded in the British Empire by the University of Capetown Chair of Social Anthropology in 1921, and earlier still by the London School of Economics' part-time Chair of Ethnology, established in 1913 for C. G. Seligman. At the time, Oxford and Cambridge only had Readerships in Anthropology. Professor Radcliffe-Brown, who had been in the Capetown Chair for five years, was the successful applicant for the Sydney appointment. He had the support of Elliot Smith and Perry, for he had been a pupil of W. H. R. Rivers, their very close associate. In any case, he was undoubtedly the obvious choice.

A graduate of Cambridge, where he was influenced by Rivers and Haddon, and an expositor of the French sociological school of Anthropology, he had done field-work in the Andaman Islands (1906–8), the West Australian central coastal region (1910–12) and along the lower Murray and the Darling Rivers when time was available during World War I. He

[4] Reference is made to this in *Sir Grafton Elliot Smith*, ed. by W. R. Dawson.

[5] The Department collaborates with the Department of Anatomy in the infrequent case of a student taking Physical Anthropology as a subject for the B.Sc. Degree.

[6] Apart from being sometime Chairman of the first, President of the second, and Australian member of the permanent Council of the third, and President of the Pan-Indian Ocean Science Association (1954–57), I was awarded by the Royal Society of New South Wales its own Medal (1949) for services to science, and the James Cook Medal (1955) for " distinguished contributions to science and human welfare ", and by the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science the Mueller Medal (1957) for contributions to anthropological science. Likewise the Australian National Research Council appointed me *David Lecturer* in 1949. These facts are mainly explained by the background and context of the foundation of Anthropology in the University of Sydney. Similarly, the A N R C Committee on Anthropology, to be mentioned in the text, consisted, in addition to the Professor of the subject, wholly of physical and biological scientists. At least, this was so for over a decade.

knew Sydney, having held a teaching post in one of the Public Schools there (1915–17), and had been Director of Education in Tonga for about a year towards the end of the War. Above all, he had just completed five years (1921–26) as first Professor of the newly founded Anthropological Department at Capetown, thus gaining the very experience needed for this new venture.[7]

Radcliffe-Brown commenced duty in Sydney in the second term 1926. He organized courses in Anthropology I and II, Pass and Distinction, and made provision for the M.A. in three " Schools " : Sociology, Ethnology and Archaeology, and for a Diploma, mainly for administrative officers of the Papuan and New Guinea services. The Australian National Research Council appointed him Chairman of its Committee on Anthropology. The role of this Committee, with its Australia-wide membership, was to advise the Council on the use of the Rockefeller grant, of which it was trustee.[8] A field-research plan was drawn up and within a year the Council had five of us out in the field in north Australia and four in Papua and Melanesia, with others following soon after.

Finally, the Research Council agreed to Radcliffe-Brown's proposal to publish a quarterly journal through which the research results could be made known. The Council always held the principle that research without publication was wasted effort. *Oceania* appeared in September 1930, with Radcliffe-Brown as Editor.

In the Doldrums

Just at this stage, however, and certainly in part as an effect of the severe and general financial depression of the period, the future of the Department of Anthropology became uncertain. Two States ceased their grants, and Radcliffe-Brown realized that other States would almost certainly do likewise, for the agreement to support the Department was of the all or none type. The amounts involved in each case, £75 to £350, were negligible, but as Anthropology meant nothing to State Treasurers, and as the States were not directly concerned with Papua and New Guinea and, apart from New South Wales, were not concerned at all with a Department in the University of Sydney, they economised in this paltry item. The five years of the initial undertaking were up. Only New South Wales did not make the cut ; but it reduced its contribution by £75 to £502, which was then included in its overall grant to the University.

More significant, however, was the Commonwealth Government's decision to reduce its grant to £1000, and to put it on a yearly basis, with a strong suggestion of non-renewal.

[7] A. P. Elkin, " A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1880–1955 ", *Oceania*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4, 1956, pp. 239–251. A. R. Brown, *The Andaman Islanders*, 1922, " Three Tribes of Western Australia ", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol XLIII, 1913 ; " Notes on the Social Organization of Australian Tribes ", Part I, *op. cit.* Vol. XLVIII, 1918 ; Part II, *op cit* Vol. LIII, 1923.

[8] Members have included G. A. Waterhouse, T. G. B. Osborn, A. N. Burkitt and H. G. Chapman (Hon. Treasurer of the A.N.R.C., succeeded come years later by O. Vonwiller) of Sydney ; Orme Masson and F. Wood-Jones of Melbourne ; J. B. Cleland and T. D. Campbell of Adelaide ; A. O. Neville of Perth ; H. Longman and H. C. Richards of Brisbane ; J. Pearson of Hobart ; and Sir Hubert Murray of Papua, (representing the Commonwealth). Except on the occasion of a meeting of ANZAAS, meetings of the Committee were limited to Sydney members ; but the Adelaide members always acknowledged the notices of meetings and frequently sent their opinions on agenda items. The Queensland members always sent apologies. All received copies of the minutes of the Committee's meetings. Of the above only Burkitt, Wood-Jones, Cleland and Campbell were directly concerned with research in one or other of the anthropological fields ; but Longman and Pearson, as Directors of Museums were interested in such research, and Neville and Sir Hubert hoped for practical results. In the late 1930's H. I. Hogbin and F. L. S. Bell of Sydney were added to the Committee. Osborn and Waterhouse had resigned. Baldwin Spencer and T. G. McLaren (Secretary, Home and Territories Department) were early members of the Committee.

Both the Government and Sir Hubert Murray seem to have been somewhat disappointed with the Department, though it is hard even to surmise just what immediate results were expected. Further, Sir Hubert did object to some opinions expressed by field-workers.

Professor Radcliffe-Brown thought the Department might be saved by making it part of an Institute financed by the Rockefeller Foundation, but although the Australian National Research Council agreed to support such an Institute, he changed his ideas and nothing was done. He was pessimistic and even assumed that *Oceania* would lapse at the end of the first Volume, i.e. June 1931. He also suggested that the Research Council should consider disposing of research equipment which had been used by field-workers during 1927–30 but was no longer required. Then, having approached the Commonwealth Government to accept responsibility for the Department, either alone or with the help of the New South Wales Government, he resigned from the Council's Committee on Anthropology at the end of 1930 and from the Chair about the same time. He accepted the opportune offer of a Professorship at Chicago and left in the middle of 1931.

Although the future looked bleak, Radcliffe-Brown had organized the Department on sound lines, and several of his students have served Anthropology well in professional capacity, e.g. H. I. Hogbin, C. W. M. Hart and R. Piddington. Further, W. E. H. Stanner and Phyllis Kaberry commenced their studies under him. In addition, he saw an extensive programme of field-research completed, and he had founded *Oceania*. This was no mean achievement.[9]

Dr. Raymond Firth, who had been lecturer in the Department, became acting-Professor in June 1931, and was also appointed by the Research Council Acting Chairman of its Committee on Anthropology and Acting Editor of *Oceania*. The Council had in the meantime received a further large grant, A£30,000, for anthropological research, to be spread over three years. Dr. Firth and the Committee drew up the initial plan for its use. W. E. H. Stanner, W. C. Groves, F. L. S. Bell, J. A. Todd, H. I. Hogbin, T. G. H. Strehlow, Ursula McConnel and later Camilla Wedgwood and R. L. Sharp received grants or Research Fellowships for field work, and the Board of Anthropological Research in the University of Adelaide for its expeditions.

Many of us remember well what an excellent Secretary Dr. Firth was for Section F, Anthropology, of the Sydney meeting of ANZAAS in August, 1932. The Section met in what was then the Anthropology lecture room under the kindly Presidency of Mr. E. W. P. Chinnery, Director of District Services and Government Anthropologist in New Guinea. A photo reveals the presence of the pleasantly youthful F. L. S. Bell, H. I. Hogbin, R. Piddington, Elsie Brammell, Caroline Kelly, Phyllis Kaberry and R. L. Firth as well as myself, and a few other interested persons, including Dame Mary Gilmore. (See Plate L.)

A few months after the Congress, the Vice-Chancellor, on the advice of Dr. Firth, asked me whether I would take charge of the Department during 1933, as Firth was hoping to have a year's leave in order to take up a temporary position at the London School of Economics. A little later, however, Dr. Firth resigned and I was appointed lecturer-in-charge from December 1932 to the end of 1933. I personally regretted his decision, for during his eighteen months as Acting-Professor, Dr. Firth had performed his threefold task of Head of the

[9] See also A. P. Elkin, " A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1880–1955 ", *Oceania*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4, pp. 240–244. More details are given in this article.

SECTION F, ANZAAS, SYDNEY, 1932.

Department, Editor of *Oceania* and Chairman of the A.N.R.C. Committee with ability, zeal and keen attention to details. Moreover he had developed good relations between Anthropology and other Departments. But with the apparently, almost certain closing down of the Department in the near future, there was little inducement for him to remain. In handing over to me, he expressed the hope that even if there were no lecturer and no secretary after 1933, I would still hold the fort on the dwindling Departmental balance, so that the structure would be there if a change for the better should come.

The Turning Point, 1933

So I was given the helm of what looked like a sinking ship, and my privilege, an ironically appropriate one, was to conduct the last rites. I had a year in which to do this, a year ushered in with the official announcement that there was no certainty, and indeed, little likelihood of Courses in either Anthropology I or II in 1934. And yet, 1933 became the turning point for the Department and for me. Strangely enough, the Australian National Research Council immediately appointed me Chairman, not Acting-Chairman, of the Anthropology Committee, and Editor, not Acting-Editor, of *Oceania*. The Council had research money in trust and was determined to use it and to publish the results whether the Department lapsed or not. The honorary executive task was given to me.

For my part, I did not take seriously, or perhaps as seriously as I should, the probable retrograde step of closing the Department. I just assumed that this would not occur. And what a year it was for me! Reports from field-workers to be read and answered; new workers going out; preparing a whole course of Anthropology II lectures; conducting a late afternoon seminar weekly for M.A. students (W. E. H. Stanner, P. Kaberry and E. Brammell), a Diploma student (F. D. McCarthy) and others, with visitors attending occasionally (M. Mead R. Fortune and G. Bateson); editing *Oceania* and writing half of it (a series of articles on Australian Totemism); and talking and writing on Aboriginal conditions.

In the midst of all this, the Commonwealth informed the University Senate that the grant for the Department would be renewed for five years. But what brought this change about? Going through an old personal file recently, I came across a letter from Grafton Elliot Smith, written in November, 1933, in which he said that hearing that the Chair was in danger, he had written to the Prime Minister, Mr. S. M. Bruce, to rescue the grant, presumably from the Federal Treasurer and from adverse arguments. He had done so not only for the sake of the Chair itself, but also because the lapse of the Chair would have entailed the withdrawal of the Rockefeller grant for field-work. His letter to Mr. Bruce was dated October 13, 1932, and of course, the Government's favourable response was not known until months had passed.[10] I have no doubt that the Department survived this crisis mainly through the intervention of this distinguished Australian, whose judgment was highly regarded by authorities both in England and in the land of his birth.

The University thereupon advertised the Chair for a five year's term. The applicants included A. N. Hocart, J. R. Marett and F. E. Williams, all three now deceased, two Australian graduates and a few others. I had no intention of applying, for my life's work seemed to me at the time to be in another field where I was well established. My opinion

[10] Elliot Smith's action in this matter is also referred to in the Biographical Record, edited by W. R. Dawson, p. 85, to which reference has been made above.

was sought and I hope given to the best of my knowledge. I suggested that Dr. Firth be invited back for the reasons given above. However, in view of certain opinions, both expressed and implied, which I could not but respect, I decided at the eleventh hour to change my career. I applied, and in a very short time the appointment was made.

It is a salutary exercise to consider why appointments are made. In this case I think the University wanted someone not unknown in the community, and whom the Senate and the Professorial Board knew. At that period it was important for the Head of the Department of Anthropology to have good relations within the University; with the small Professorial Board of the day; with the Australian National Research Council; with the Territories' Administrations, both as regards training Patrol Officers and also smoothing the field-workers' paths; and finally with Missionary organizations.

As for myself, the A.N.R.C. had known me for six years, and some members of its Executive and of the Senate and the Professorial Board had known me for twenty years, and all made me very welcome. In addition, I had close associations with the heads of Missionary Societies and had many personal contacts with the Territories' staffs.

The field of applicants was necessarily different in the early 1930's from what it is to-day. There had been no courses in Anthropology in Australia or New Zealand before 1926. Those, like R. Firth, R. F. Fortune and myself, who desired to study the subject seriously, had specialized in their first degrees in other subjects—economics, psychology etcetera. We then went to England, where during the 1920's definite advances were being made in Anthropology as an academic discipline. My own major study had been in philosophy and sociology, with history as the supporting subject, but I had also worked in geology and had a great interest in the works of Charles Darwin. My anthropological inspiration came from Durkheim, W. H. R. Rivers, Haddon and Marett and from many writers of earlier and current days on prehistory and physical anthropology, and on the Australian Aborigines. In 1923 I met Dr. Haddon and W. J. Perry at the Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Sydney, for I had decided to go to England to study Anthropology out of sheer interest, and with no thought of finding in it a career. I was well established in a career.

I spent two years, 1925–27, at University College, London, where Anthropology was a division, or so it seemed, in the Department of Anatomy, of which Grafton Elliot Smith was the Professor. I went through the gamut of Physical Anthropology, plus some comparative study of the brain, as would be taken for granted in Elliot Smith's School; read prehistory and imbibed all the excitement of the discovery of Rhodesian man; attended some seminars at the London School of Economics; and wrote a thesis on the Myth and Ritual of the Australian Aborigines, which made me conversant with almost everything that had then been written about them. I was not subjected to any indoctrination of theories of diffusion or of Egypt as the source of civilization, not even at the daily lunches with Elliot Smith, S. H. Hooke and W. J. Perry. Elliot Smith was always in happy mood, and full of interesting and often humorous stories about the background of scientific work and workers. And though he did write some stringent criticisms of anti-diffusionists, I never *heard* him or Perry say a harsh word about those who attacked them and their theories. Perry simply maintained that he was working out an hypothesis which would explain the wide distribution of significant elements of social organization and culture, and that this was in no way a criticism of functionalist theories.

In 1926 one of those apparently casual happenings took place, which prove later to be a turning point for one or other of those concerned. The Rockefeller Foundation made a grant to Radcliffe-Brown to visit England and America on his way from South Africa to Australia. I met him at a lecture at the London School of Economics and in our brief conversation said that I was interested in the Australian Aborigines, to which he replied that they were his chief interest, or one of his main interests. I wished him every success at Sydney. Not many months later he cabled Perry asking whether I would do field work in the Kimberley Division of Western Australia for the Australian National Research Council. For though he had no time for Perry's *Children of the Sun* nor for Elliot Smith's *Diffusion*, he did value Perry's association with Rivers. Through that chance meeting with Radcliffe-Brown I came out to the Kimberleys in 1927 as the A.N.R.C. first Research Fellow. Twelve months in the tropical north-west and, a year later, a similar period in the arid regions of the continent at least gave me a good climatic try-out.

Development of the Department of Anthropology, Sydney.

The Department in 1934 consisted of a Professor, appointed for five years, and a secretary. Assistance with lecturing was provided, thanks to the A.N.R.C., by field-workers who were back in Sydney writing up their material: W. E. H. Stanner in 1933, Camilla Wedgwood in 1934, H. I. Hogbin in 1935.

This temporary and hand-to-mouth existence was not satisfactory, especially as I had managed to stabilize the arrangements for the training of the New Guinea Cadet Patrol Officers; for the time being they were to come for two terms of intensive training in Anthropology and several other subjects, but in the near future would come for the full year.

Therefore, with the permission and support of the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Robert Wallace, I approached the Prime Minister, The Rt. Hon. J. Lyons, to extend the grant in the first instance from five to ten years, and to increase it by £500 p.a. to allow a permanent lecturer to be appointed. As Mr. Lyons was going to England, I also wrote to Elliot Smith in London asking him kindly to get in touch with the Prime Minister and back my request. This he did, pointing out his association with the moves to found the Chair and his intervention in 1932 to save it, and also emphasizing that when he supported my appointment to the Chair at the end of 1933, he took it for granted that the Commonwealth Government would give me the necessary means of developing the Department. I remember receiving Elliot Smith's reply about February 1936: "The Prime Minister will do what you want". And he did. The official letter came through in due time, and on my recommendation Dr. H. I. Hogbin was appointed permanent lecturer in Anthropology in 1936.

About this time too, the Vice-Chancellor agreed to relieve me from paying from the Government grant, £100 a year for Departmental maintenance and also the cost of anthropological books ordered for the Fisher Library. This was now reasonable as the Department was stabilized, and integrated into the University structure. In 1938 the position of tutor-research assistant was established. This not only helped me on the library side with research projects, but also gave a series of good graduates good opportunities for further study.[11] In 1945 a lectureship was added so that I could give more attention to social science research, in particular empirical sociology. Development in social science research in the University

[11] E.g. Mona Ravenscroft, Jean Craig, Vere Hole, Phyllis Robinson, J. H. Bell, R. MacKenzie.

was asked for under the Commonwealth scheme of grants for research to the University. Dr. Capell was appointed. Another, though indirect, effect of this development was the Vice-Chancellor's idea of a category of Teaching-Fellows; these were to be temporary members of staff who should be given both research and limited teaching experience. From their apprentice-ship ranks permanent lecturers would come. I obtained one such position for the Department and a few years later a temporary lectureship also. This latter became a permanent position in 1955. Dr. R. M. Berndt was appointed, but did not take up the position as he accepted a Senior Lectureship at Perth. Mr. M. J. Meggitt took his place.

By 1956 the Department's establishment had grown to a Professor, two Readers, a Lecturer, a Teaching-Fellow, a Tutor and a Secretary, and for several years there had been from two to five persons on University research grants or fellowships. Further, whereas in 1934 there was provision for two Courses, with Pass and Distinction in each, in the B.A., and for a Diploma and the M.A., with the setting up of Honours Schools in the Faculty of Arts in 1938, Anthropology III was introduced with its own series of lectures and seminars. And finally, when in 1955 the Ph.D. in Arts was established, the first candidates, four in number, came from Anthropology.

The Courses in Anthropology to 1956

Anthropology I consisted of an introduction to General and Social Anthropology together with descriptive lectures on selected peoples, and the study of a special area for Distinction students. Anthropology II Pass was a comparative study of social, economic, legal, political, and religious institutions, and the Distinction work was concentrated mainly on a particular author or theory. Anthropology III included lectures and seminars on the history of anthropology, scientific method, and the works of selected contributors to sociological and anthropological theory.

Sociology

Soon after my return from field work in north-west and central Australia to live in a country town, I realized that the factors of cohesion and continuity operating in our society, especially in country districts and towns, were similar to those operating in an Aboriginal community. For this reason, and also because I realized that very few of my Anthropology II students would ever live or work amongst primitive peoples, I decided that the societies and institutions studied and lectured on, should include our own. Perhaps this justified the title of the course, Comparative Sociology,—a title which I had inherited. One result was that fifty per cent of the M.A. theses during my years of office were concerned with our own society. Indeed, the Department was regarded by the University Research Committee to be engaged in "empirical sociology" as well as in anthropology. Grants were made, for example, for research in rural and industrial sociology, into the assimilation of migrants and into various problems associated with post-war reconstruction.[12]

My interest in mixed-blood Aboriginal problems did not arise until 1936. I was at Burnt Bridge Aboriginal Settlement discussing totemism and such like with an elder, when

[12] Apart from grants made by the Dept. of Post-War Reconstruction through the Commonwealth Office of Education to the University for this type of research, the Department of the Interior and later the Department of Immigration made separate grants to the Department of Anthropology for research into migrant problems conducted by Mrs. Caroline Kelly.

he suddenly said, " These boys want to talk to you ". Looking up I saw six men in their forties and fifties. They were quarter-caste rather than half-caste. They told me in what ways they thought they had been, and were still being, unfairly treated by the white community and authorities. I was soon to hear more of this sort of complaint, in which their interpretation of local history and of present Aboriginal–white relations were involved. I realized that both social and scientific problems were involved, and set to work at once on them. I am grateful to those who have done field-work for me in this sphere and helped towards a sound understanding of the issues, as well as adding to our scientific knowledge.[13] This is still a very important field for research.

Linguistics

The study of a people involves an adequate knowledge of their language. The latter is a symbol of, and an essential means of, understanding their culture, just as a grasp of the meaning of the language depends on knowledge of the culture. My struggle with the complex Ungarinyin language in the Northern Kimberley in 1928 convinced me that something should be done to assist field workers in this part of their research. Moreover, there was the obvious duty to record and analyse the languages of Australia and Melanesia in the interests of linguistics.

I was therefore very pleased when I managed to steer Mr. (as he then was) A. Capell, who was already known in the early 1930's for his Melanesian linguistic studies, to London, then to the Kimberleys and to Aboriginal linguistics generally, and finally into this Department, where he is now Reader in Oceanic Languages. This enabled some teaching of linguistics to be given to Anthropology I Distinction students and also to Missionary students. In addition, this section of the Department became a veritable clearing house for Australian and Melanesian linguistics. Further, from the nucleus in the Department, through Dr. Capell's vision and drive, linguistics has diffused into the Faculty of Arts to be also a full course in the B.A.

Having established this section, I was able to provide Fellowships for Dr. S. Wurm, a distinguished linguist from Europe, for a few years, until he went to the School of Pacific Studies in the Australian National University, to fill a serious gap in its structure. Mr. G. O'Grady has taken his place here.

The publication of linguistic research results is essential, but very expensive. I felt that I had accomplished something when I edited *Oceania Monograph, No.* 3, " Studies in Australian Linguistics ", in 1937 ; found the money to publish Mr. T. G. H. Strehlow's " Aranda Phonetics and Grammar ", *Oceania Monograph, No.* 7, in 1944 ; and in between these two had published C. M. Churchward's " Tales of a Lonely Island ", *Oceania Monograph, No.* 4, 1939. In this way I was trying to encourage workers in the linguistic field, and I view with some satisfaction the development which has taken place. This includes the initiation of a new series of *Oceania Linguistic Monographs* in 1956, at the suggestion of Dr. Capell and

[13] Some of these workers used their results in thesis for Diplomas or Degrees ; others were not engaged in thesis-preparation. They included Mrs. Caroline Kelly, who also helped very much on the practical side of getting reforms ; Marie Reay, J. H. Bell, M. Calley, Ruth Fink, Pamela Nixon, Esther Wait, Alison Harvey (in Central Australia) and R. M. and Catherine Berndt (mainly in South Australia). Except where specially indicated, these anthropologists have worked in New South Wales. My own work has been mainly on the north coast of N.S.W. and in south-eastern Queensland.

Dr. Wurm, who are joint Editors, with myself as a kind of general Editor and financial manager. Mr. G. O'Grady does much of the stencil and assembling work, so as to keep down costs. Four of this series have been issued and others are planned.

Archaeology and Physical Anthropology

When making its representations, not only to the Governments, but also to the University of Sydney with regard to establishing the Department, the Australian National Research Council stressed that principal attention should be paid to social and cultural anthropology. Other aspects of the subject, however, were not to be precluded. The Department was to collaborate, as we have seen, with the Departments of Anatomy and History and others. This has been done. In particular, some Honours students in Archaeology have combined their final year work with Anthropology III, and some History Honours students who have also taken Anthropology have done theses of interest to both Departments. In prehistory of the Australian region, the Department has done very little, but Mr. F. D. McCarthy, Curator of Anthropology in the Australian Museum, Sydney, who holds the University Diploma in Anthropology, has done an amazing amount of work in this field.

For Physical Anthropology, we have relied on the Department of Anatomy, first on Professors Burkitt and J. Shellshear, and then on Professor N. W. G. Macintosh, both for instruction and also for guidance in research projects. Professor Macintosh has done field research in this subject, and also in archaeology in Arnhem Land, as well as playing a major part in the University of Sydney and Nuffield Research project in New Guinea, which it has been my good fortune to organize, 1955–58.

Having come out of the triple field of Social and Physical Anthropology and of Prehistory, I would like to see Physical Anthropology and Prehistory of the Australian-Melanesian region developed in this University. I have dreamed of an Institute in which all three disciplines, and Archaeology could be fostered. The harvest is rich. We need the trained reapers.[14]

Art and Music

There seems to be no end to the aspects of culture to be studied, and in which some degree of specialization is demanded. Material culture and technology is an example; it is usually considered to be the province of Museum workers. Art and Music are two other such fields. The former fits well into Museum programmes, provided the interested and skilled staff be available. The Australian Museum, Sydney; the National Museum, Melbourne; and the South Australian Museum, Adelaide, have made valuable contributions to our knowledge of Aboriginal Art, through their collections and through the publications of F. D. McCarthy, Baldwin Spencer, and C. P. Mountford in particular. But we must not overlook the contributions of Dr. L. Adam, Ursula McConnel, D. S. Davidson, the Frobenius Expedition, R. M. and C. H. Berndt, and a few others, nor the impressive collections of Aboriginal Art obtained by Australian National Research Council field-workers, especially by R. M. and C. H. Berndt. Displays of this material and also of Island art were placed for years in the lecture room of the Sydney Department of Anthropology, so that students at least were conscious of native art.[15]

[14] I have from time to time opened the pages of *Oceania* to Physical Anthropology and Prehistory.

[15] These collections are now housed, on loan, in the Institute of Anatomy, Canberra.

A sign of the development of our knowledge of Aboriginal art is indicated by the fact that whereas there were only passing references to it in the first edition of my own *The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them*, 1938, the third edition, 1954, contained a new chapter on Art, and another one on Music and Dancing. My own interest in Aboriginal art arose principally from my good fortune in discovering in 1928 the meaning and function of the Wondjina galleries in the Northern Kimberley, and then in seeing the intimate relation of art to technology and to ritual in many parts of the continent. The collection and study of the form, meaning and function of art in Australia and Melanesia is an anthropological duty. So too, is the collection, with recording apparatus, and the study of native music. Being especially impressed by Arnhem Land music in 1946 I decided to record it as soon as I could obtain suitable portable apparatus. Since 1949 I have made 29 double-sided 16 inch slow speed discs, and 43 of 12 inch, mainly of Aboriginal music; eleven of the smaller discs are of New Guinea music. The material on 14 of the 12 inch records was collected by other workers, directly or indirectly connected with this Department. Pressings from the permanent "masters" have been made available to persons and societies interested in the growing discipline of Musicology. Two students of the University Department of Music devoted their Honours Theses to the analysis of some of this music; public interest has been aroused; and already one Monograph has been published.[16]

Conclusion

This is only *one chapter*. I cannot cover in it even all the work of this one Department, nor touch on the vast amount of field research carried out under its direction for the Australian National Research Council from 1926–1940, nor on what has been done since then on funds made available by the University Research Committee and on various Fellowships. And I can only mention *Oceania*, now in its 29th Volume, for the editing and financing of which I have been responsible for nearly twenty-six years.

Regretfully, too, I must leave to another Chapter, the story of the development of Anthropology in Australia in other Institutions and Societies. There are various Anthropological Societies in the several States, and *Mankind*, the valuable publication of the New South Wales Society, edited for years now by Mr. F. L. S. Bell, has gained the respect of anthropologists here and abroad. Then there are the Museums, three of which, in particular, have played important parts in the history of Anthropology in Australia: Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney, coupled for decades with the names of Baldwin Spencer, E. C. Stirling and R. Etheridge Jnr. respectively. In recent years we think of Messrs. Hale and Tindale in Adelaide and of F. D. McCarthy in Sydney.

This other Chapter, too, must deal with the rise of Anthropology in other Universities. My nearest Professorial neighbour until 1950 was in South Africa. But in that year a Department was established in Auckland University with R. Piddington, a Sydney graduate and former A.N.R.C. field-worker as first Professor, and now the new Professor for Sydney, W. R. Geddes, comes from Auckland. Further, a Department of Anthropology was founded in the School of Pacific Studies, the Australian National University, Canberra. Its first Reader (appointed 1949) was W. E. H. Stanner, also a Sydney graduate and former A.N.R.C. field-

[16] *Arnhem Land Music, Oceania Monograph, No.* 9, 1958, by A. P. Elkin and Trevor Jones. Four more discs are being made of recordings obtained in Central Australia in April this year. All these records are standard cut, and 33⅓ speed.

worker ; while its second Professor is J. A. Barnes, who has left Sydney (1958) after two short years to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Professor S. F. Nadel (1950–56). Lastly, in 1956 Dr. R. M. Berndt went from us to Perth as Senior Lecturer in Anthropology to build up, in the first instance within the Department of Psychology, a division of Anthropology. This he is doing successfully. Melbourne wants a Chair and so do Adelaide and Brisbane. Let us hope that financial or other obstacles will soon be overcome, and that Departments will be created, each perhaps to specialize in different aspects of Anthropology.

Finally, I have said almost nothing about Applied Anthropology, although it has been for a quarter of a century a feature of the work of the Sydney Department, particularly through the Courses provided for administrative officers and missionaries, and through its emphasis on the study of social and culture change. Moreover, for me personally, I have regarded the application of anthropological knowledge and principles to administrative and missionary problems as a direct challenge and responsibility.

Then and Now

So I look back to 1923, when I talked with Peter Buck and Skinner at lunch during the Pan-Pacific Science Congress, and along the cloister with Haddon, Perry and others, and then I think of all the changes in Anthropology in Australia since then. When I lectured for the University Tutorial Class Department in that year, I could hope to keep up to date in Physical Anthropology, Prehistory and Social Anthropology. But now the quantity of writing is appalling and the sophistication of much of it frightening. Still those days of thirty-five years ago were good, adventurous days, with new peoples still to be discovered, missing links to be sought, phases of prehistory to be determined, and methods in all fields to be developed. The growth of anthropological knowledge has been almost miraculous, an effect of the transition from a spare time and largely amateurish activity to a full-time profession.

In this Chapter I have outlined the development of Anthropology in Australia, from a thin, broken line of research workers, 1870 to 1914, to a phalanx of workers, and in the background, scores issuing from the Universities with, I hope, a broader outlook, and a greater charity towards other peoples.

We can look back, and wonder !
We look forward, with great hope.

A. P. Elkin

Melanesia : Material Culture. **Ryan.**

Some Decorated Fighting-Shields from the Mendi Valley,[1] Southern Highlands District of Papua. *By D'Arcy J. Ryan, B.A.(Syd.), B.Litl.(Oxon.), Walter Mersh Strong Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney.*

The people of the Mendi Valley are small in stature : the average height of the men being about five feet one inch. They live in patrilineal, localized clans which were, before the arrival of the Administration, in what seems to have been a constant state, if not of open warfare then at least, of guerrilla feuding with one or more of their neighbours. With the establishment of the " Pax Australiana ", fighting has been strictly forbidden and has in fact ceased on any large or regular scale, although sporadic outbursts still occur. To-day, therefore, the shields described below are no longer made, nor is it likely that they will ever be used in battle again. Their use was always the practical one of defense and they were never carried, as are the Mendi stone axes, on purely ceremonial occasions.

The owners of the shields do not seem to feel any special attachment to them. There is no suggestion, as there is with certain other artifacts, of their being family heirlooms, the designs being entirely decorative and not representing family crests. It is true that in a fight certain individuals might be easily identifiable by their shield-patterns and, at times, this could be quite important,[2] but there seems to have been no idea of personal identity with the design; and when a shield was destroyed and its owner made a new one, he would not necessarily repeat the original pattern. In this respect, the attitude of a Mendi to the design on his war-shield was very different from that of, say, a medieval knight to the design on his. The Mendi shield-design was not, in any sense of the word, an escutcheon. The shields do not even seem to have any sentimental value for their owners as, for example, souvenirs of successful fights. Since they have ceased to be of any practical use, they are readily disposed of for very small payments with no signs of regret.[3]

Three types of shield were used in Mendi : A. *shomo* ; B. *wörrumbi* and C. *elâyaborr*.

The *shomo* (no. 1) was a very large (66 ins. × 24 ins.) rectangular shield carried by spear-fighters. It was made of the bast or fibrous inner bark of a species of mountain-palm and cut with the grain running vertically. In order to prevent splitting, it was bound along its upper and lower edges with rattan cord (fig. 1 (A)). The *shomo* was prevented from curling by a batten (B) strapped across the back, and to this batten was attached the looped shoulder-strap (C). Since the *shomo* was clumsy and quite heavy, it was provided with a steadying-cord (D) to prevent it swinging aside and exposing the bearer. The *shomo* was not very frequently used, and I am told, was obsolescent even before the arrival of white man. I found only one specimen in good preservation.[4]

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[1] The Mendi Valley was first opened to Europeans in 1950 and a large part of it is still designated a " restricted area ".

[2] Two examples : (a) A great fighter might wish to establish a reputation for bravery, and will use his shield-design, together with other personal decoration, to make himself as conspicuous as possible. (b) Close kinsmen frequently found themselves on opposite sides in a fight ; in this case, they were careful to avoid shooting at each other, and their shields served as convenient means of identification.

[3] They are now used occasionally as sleeping-platforms, or as door-slats ; otherwise they are left stored in the house-rafters.

[4] No. 1 : now in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

The *wörrumbi* was the big (av. 30 inches by 12 inches), formal battle-shield worn by bowmen (nos. 2-13). Like the *shomo*, it was carried only when clans opposed each other in open lines of battle ; it was not, like the *eláyaborr*, used in the more common skirmishing and guerrilla

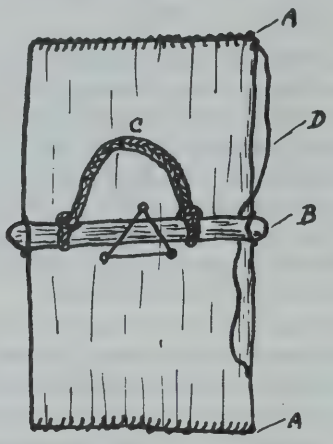


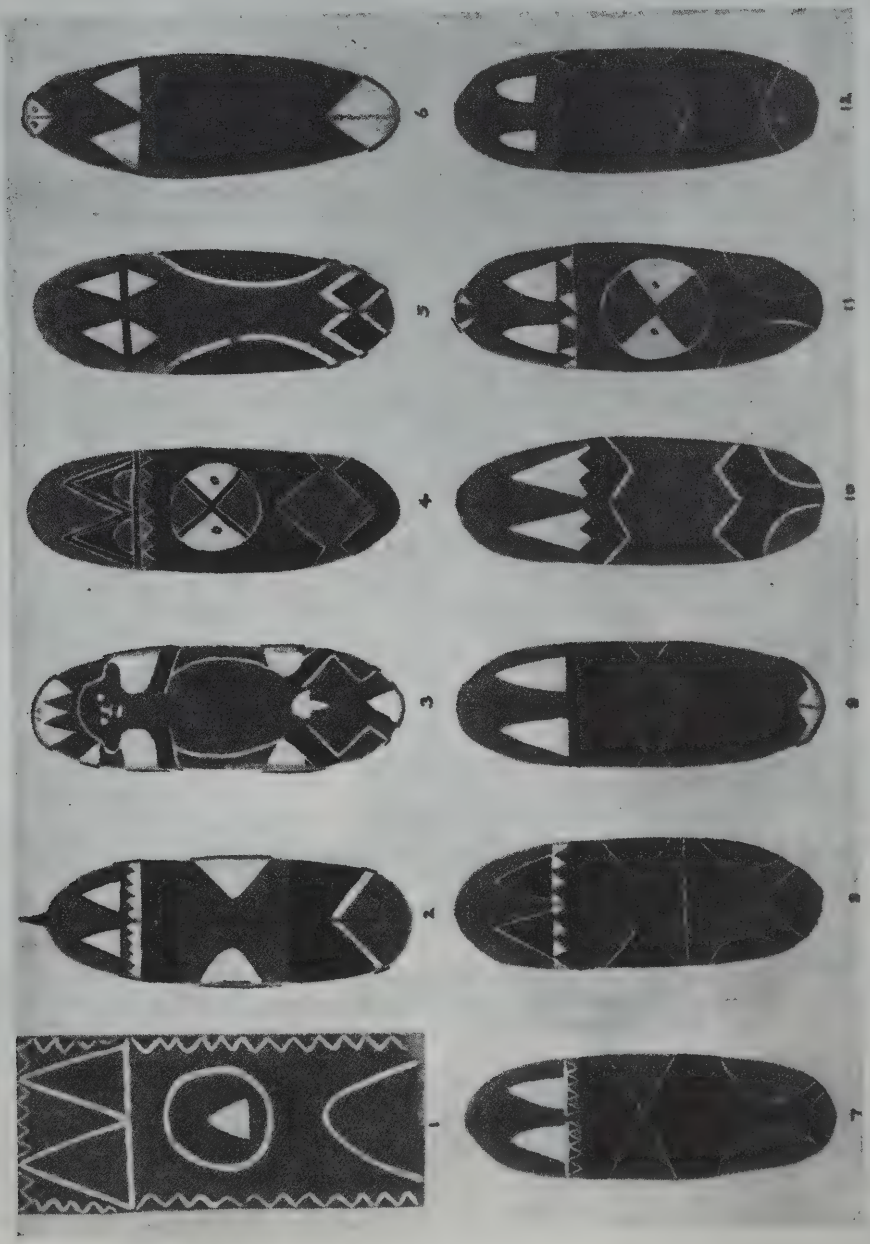
Fig. I.

raiding. It was made of one of the mountain hardwoods, and was carved out with an axe in one solid piece to a thickness of between half and one-and-a-half inches. That this was an effective defense against bone-tipped arrows is shown by the many broken arrow-tips embedded

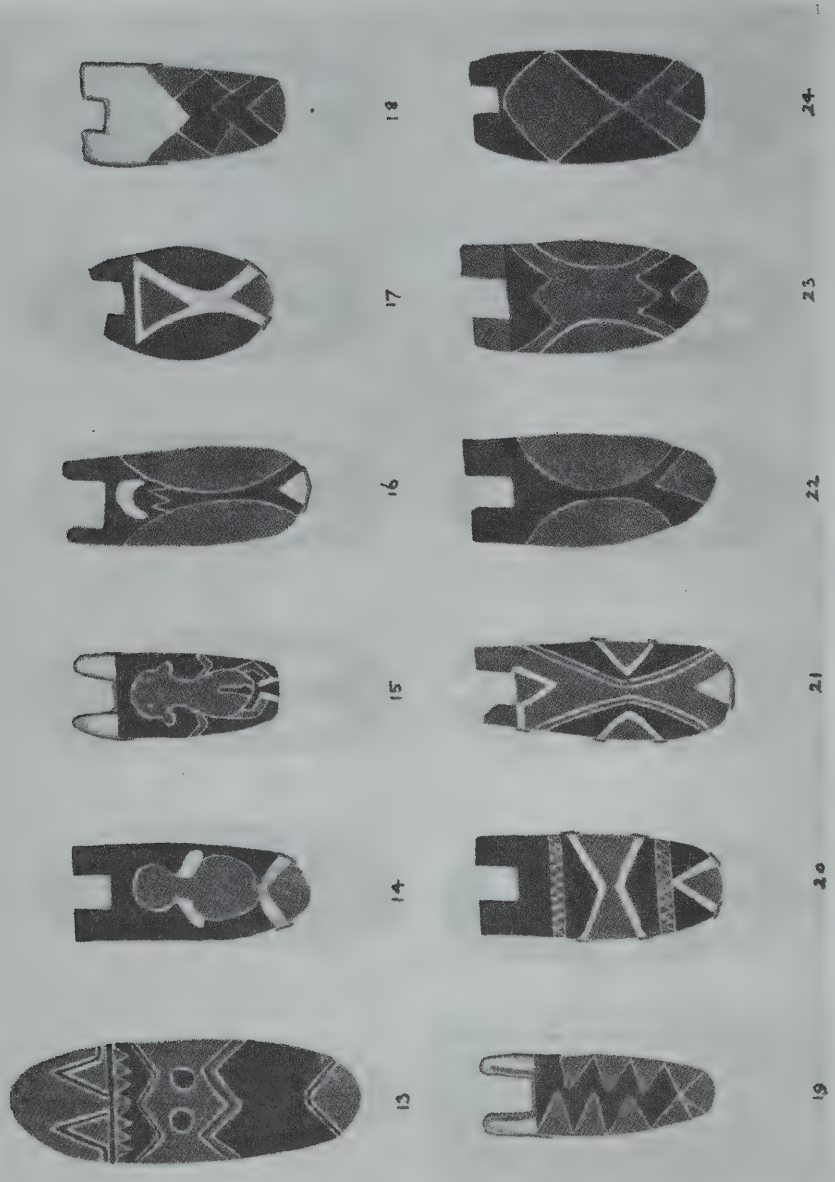
Fig. II.

in each of the specimens examined. The *wörrumbi* was slung from the shoulder of the bow-arm by a looped shoulder-strap attached to the shield by threading it though two holes and knotting the ends (fig. II (A)). It was steadied by the firing-hand, which was free.

DECORATED FIGHTING SHIELDS, PAPUA.



DECORATED FIGHTING SHIELDS, PAPUA.



On the occasions on which this shield was carried, the fighters would decorate themselves with oil, paint, feathers and leaves. The painting on the shield would be refurbished, and a " plume " of grass or feathers would be tied to the top of the shield by two small holes (B) which are found in all specimens. The *wörrumbi* is always slightly concave in front, and convex at the back, and a distinctive feature of most examples is the raised ridge, known as the *mesha* or " spine ", which forms a central axis both to the shield and to its decoration, for the pattern is symmetrical on either side of the spine. The spine probably strengthens the shield, although this was never stated, and it may, rarely, be protracted into a spike at the top (no. 2), but with no special significance. The carving of the spine is said to have been introduced within the last generation or so and to have been coincident with the arrival in Mendi of the European steel tomahawk. Before this, shields had been carved out with a stone adze and the cutting of an embossed spine with this tool would indeed have been difficult. Of the two illustrated examples without spines (nos. 3 and 4), the anthropomorphic shield

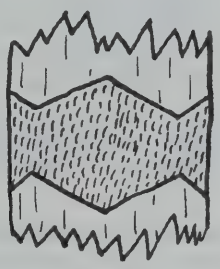


Fig. III.

(no. 3) was said to date from this earlier period, and certainly, its decoration differs markedly from that of all the others ; in over a hundred specimens submitted to me, there was no other like it.

Of the colours used, the red-ochre and the white are both mineral dyes, not found locally, but traded in from the west. Informants say they are natural clays which, as far as they know, are not specially treated. The black colouring is usually the resinous deposit of casuarina-smoke which forms while the shields are stored in the house-rafters. The whole shield is blackened and the others colours are then applied on top by means of fingers, leaves or crude brushes made of chewed twigs. Another method of blackening a shield is with charcoal, mixed with the dark-purple juice of a plant, a variety of *coleus*, which acts as a fixative.

The designs are incised on the shields, so that refurbishing the colours is merely a matter of filling in the outlines. The designs, therefore, are permanent, but the actual placement of colour is largely a matter of personal choice. It may be noted, however, that on most *wörrumbi* and many *eláyaborr* certain areas are covered with incised scoring (fig. III), and these sections are usually coloured red.

Another point in connection with the designs is that certain shields (e.g. no. 5) are " palimpsests ", that is, a second sign has been incised over an almost erased earlier one, to which it bears no relation ; when the shield is repainted, the first design is completely ignored. This seems a further indication that the designs are of no personal or intrinsic significance.

When the *wárrumbi* patterns are analysed in detail, it will be observed that in all cases, with the sole exception of no. 3, two elements are repeated : the two large triangles, or ogives, at the top, and immediately under them, some variation on a dog-tooth or zig-zag pattern. In no. 5, this latter element has been simplified to two inverted triangles, while no. 6 has it elaborated to a chevron-pattern. The decoration on the lower sections of the shields seems to be more or less free-variation on a limited number of motifs which recur in different combin-

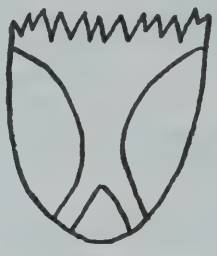


Fig. IV.

ations but with no particular consistency. One may observe, however, that some variation on the motif in fig. IV appears with particular frequency, in seven of the eleven cases (nos. 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

The Mendi themselves, while aware of this repetition of design, attach no significance whatever to it.[5] None of the elements in the design were named, and it did not seem, in fact, that they were thought of as " elements " at all.

Fig. V.

Despite, however, the complete lack of Mendi interest in any interpretation of their shield-designs, it still seems not unreasonable to suggest that the later designs are formalizations of the older anthropomorphic figure in no. 3, and that the recurring elements common to nearly all of them represent eyes, teeth and limbs ; while the scored, red areas (fig. III) might well indicate skin and body-hair.

[5] They merely gave their usual reply to all questions of culture-rationalization : " That is the way we always do it ". The Mendi are not a culturally self-conscious people.

The *eláyaborr* was a much smaller and lighter shield used also in formal fights, but primarily designed for skirmishing and small raiding-parties. ("We'd be sitting in our house at night, but not feeling sleepy, and someone would say, ' Let's go and raid the Tungenjup '. So we'd grab our *eláyaborr* and our bows and arrows, and off we'd go . . . . "). On such minor occasions, the *eláyaborr* would not be repainted. This type of shield was also hung from one shoulder by a long diagonal loop (fig. V (A)), and the wearer would look through the notch (B), while the projections (C) gave some measure of protection to his head.

The *eláyaborr* are incised and painted like the *wörrumbi*. But there was no suggestion here that the two anthropomorphic figures (nos. 14 and 15) were older than the others, and it is not possible to venture even the most tentative interpretations of most of their designs. The inverted crescent in no. 16 represents a gold-lip shell, one of the major forms of wealth in Mendi.

Aesthetically, the shields are quite skilful examples of wood-work. Most of the designs are well-conceived and show a nice sense of spatial form and of the balance of colour-masses. There is also evidence of a feeling for consistency of style : the fine line-work of nos. 4 and 13 ; the heavier treatment of nos. 5 and 10 and the solid blocks of colour in nos. 6, 9 and 17.

Since it is improbable that these shields will continue to be made, it seems that, even on æsthetic grounds alone, some record of them should be preserved.

D'Arcy Ryan.

Australia : Social Anthropology. **Berndt.**

The Mountford Volume on Arnhem Land Art, Myth and Symbolism : A Critical Review.
By Ronald M. Berndt, M.A., Ph.D., Dip.Anthrop., Senior Lecturer in Anthropology, University of Western Australia.

The publication of Mr. C. P. Mountford's volume on the art, myth and symbolism of Arnhem Land (1956) brings to our attention the urgent need to take stock of this anthropologically neglected aspect of Australian Aboriginal life. What indeed do we know, in social anthropological terms, of the function and significance of Aboriginal art ? The answer must be—precious little : and that knowledge is not appreciably extended in the book under review. I am, of course, aware of the many articles that have appeared over the years (and will presently refer to some of them). Further, there is the fact that public attention has been focussed on this aspect (in particular, just recently), as exotic, and consequently a good thing commercially, to the virtual exclusion of others. But questions which a social anthropologist might ask are not even posed in this volume, let alone answered. For example, what is the social significance of art? What can works of art (variously defined) tell us about the particular society and culture in which we find them? This involves the question not only of what art is, in a specific context, but also (as, essentially, part of that question) of what it means both to the artist and to others within his social unit (however widely or narrowly this may be delineated). In considering the meaning of art—that is, over and above a description of content—we are, to put it briefly, thrown into the realm of values. Thinking in terms of any given society one might suggest, for instance, that the values manifested in its artistic productions should not be incompatible with those manifested in other social and cultural phenomena (which does not mean that they should be uniform). Here the question of style becomes especially important.

In the volume under review none of the problems I have indicated are raised. It is therefore unnecessary for me to consider or discuss them further here : I have mentioned them briefly elsewhere.[1] My criticism will rest primarily on ethnographical details and not on other issues. Even then the points I bring up are few compared to those which should be considered in detail, but limitations of time and of space prevent me from doing so. Mainly because this volume claims to be anthropological, scientific and definitive as far as Arnhem Land art, myth and symbolism are concerned, I have thought it necessary to deal with it in this way, rather than in the brusque manner which it deserves. The topic is too important to evade, and in any case Arnhem Land art, mythology and symbolism deserve something better.

Apart from the acknowledged value of this book in making available to us a great number of illustrations relating to Arnhem Land artistic productions (and to the layman this may well override all other considerations), it has little to commend it.[2] The discussion is not ' scientific ' nor anthropological, and the descriptive procedure used throughout the volume is far from satisfactory. As far as the study of Australian Aboriginal art and mythology is concerned it is retrogressive.[3] But before I elaborate, there are a few general points that must be considered.

On the dust jacket, and in the Foreword, the Preface and the Introduction, Arnhem Land is said to have been little known prior to the visit of the American-Australian Scientific Expedition ; and the aura of remoteness, of ' breaking new ground ', was deliberately nourished in the Press during that time (April-November 1948). This was a complete misrepresentation, since the Arnhem Landers have, over a considerable period of time, had more association with alien peoples than most other Australian Aborigines.[4] In reference to Europeans,

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[1] R. and C. Berndt (1957) ; R. Berndt (1958).

[2] I have it on good authority that, in spite of the statement on pp. 179-80, Mountford's method of illustrating some text figures by copying from photographs has led to inaccuracies. Plate 34 A in particular shows not only wrong head shapes of the birds and men but incorrect body lines : and this is true for a number of other figures. This procedure facilitates wrong interpretation. Further, colours given for plate and figure reproductions are inadequate in many instances : the term " polychrome " is quite unsatisfactory, and simply means " painted in many colours ." In figure 39 it is reasonable to suggest that the heads to various figures in this scene were not drawn. Further, there is no indication throughout this work or his earlier one (Mountford 1954) of where the many paintings and objects are lodged. I gather from other sources that most of the collection was divided between the U.S. National Museum, the Australian Museum in Sydney and the Commonwealth Government, but some items are in the South Australian Museum and others possibly still in Mountford's possession.

[3] A further example of retrogression is an article by K. Kupka (1957 : 264-7), which contains a number of misrepresentations of the art and culture of the Arnhem Landers.

One of these is the statement that " old men painters at Yirrkalla deny that it (i.e., bark painting) existed there before the arrival of the white man, a missionary in this case. In other spots, such as Milingimbi, it has only been practised rarely " (p. 266). As most serious students have observed in this region, the evidence seems fairly clear that bark painting in Arnhem Land is traditional as regards medium, technique and subject matter, and certainly there is nothing to suggest that it is of missionary origin. See, e.g., B. Spencer (1914 : 432-39) ; G. H. Wilkins (1928 : 156, and facing illustration) on his 1923-25 expedition came across several x-ray paintings on " the discarded bark roof " of a native hut on the Goyder River ; W. L. Warner (1937 : 505) refers to bark drawings " used in the ulmark (i.e., ŋurlmag) ceremony."

[4] Reference may be made e.g. to R. and C. Berndt (1954) : see Chapter 1 and relevant notes. This volume was not mentioned by Mountford, even though it was directly relevant to much of his discussion. (Cf. for instance, to note only one point, Mountford's version of one Baijini myth, Mountford : 334, with our account of the arrival of two Macassan praus, in Berndt 1954 : 41-2.)

Apart from Flinders' reference in 1803 to drawings at Chasm Island (Mountford : 102), others were reported in 1887 at Mt. Delight in the Arafura country (Gov. Resident, Report on N.T. for the year 1887 : 2-3), and in 1893 at Oenpelli (McKinlay and party camped here in 1866 for three weeks and must have seen some of the cave paintings : Gov. Resident, Report on the N.T. for the year 1894 : 8) : re R. and C. Berndt (1954 : 99-100).

this point is consistently played down. There are the scantiest of references to the mission stations situated at Yirrkalla, Oenpelli, Milingimbi and Roper River (see p. xxiii). For instance, no one unacquainted with the position would realize (from reading e.g. pp. xxv-xxvii—in spite of the comment on the " mission hospital "—and p. xxviii) that in both cases the expedition base was established at Yirkalla and Oenpelli Mission stations, respectively. (Cf. the maps shown in Figure 10, p. 110, and Figure 11, p. 113.)

As far as Part I (Aboriginal Art of Australia) is concerned, which includes a general section on Australian Aboriginal art : the function of " primitive " art ; art styles and distribution in Arnhem Land ; mediums of expression ; techniques ;[5] the artists[6]—all this is hopelessly inadquate. Only two notes refer to the work of Warner[7] and none to Elkin;[8] Elkin, Berndt and Berndt ;[9] McCarthy[10] and Basedow[11]—these works are mentioned later, but not in terms of a general study of Arnhem Land art. The deficiencies in (e.g.) Part I of Mountford's volume are brought clearly into focus when it is contrasted with McCarthy's recent article on this same subject.[12] To build on the basis of others is to be commended, perhaps even more so than breaking new ground. In this volume Mountford has used one of the bark paintings illustrated in E., B. and B. (1950 : Plate 2[13] ; M. 1956 : Plate 41 C),

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[5] Mountford mentions only three kinds of brush in use in Arnhem Land. In addition to these, the human hair brush is used at Yirrkalla, as well as burred orchid tuber : these are not mentioned by him. Incidentally, no measurements are given for the objects illustrated. No clear statement is made (cf. pp. 10-11) concerning the coloured ochres etc. in use at Yirrkalla and Oenpelli. At the former place, red (*migu*—commonly called ; also other varieties, and terms) and yellow (*gangur*—commonly used ; also other varieties, and terms) are relatively plentiful, as is white pipeclay (*gamununggu*—commonly used, but other terms are also used). For black colouring charcoal is often used, as well as a black stone called *djunabal* obtained from Caledon Bay. At Oenpelli the colours are not always obtained by trade : there is plenty of yellow and white ochre available, as well as red—and black charcoal. Although one does not see much black colouring in cave paintings around Oenpelli, there is no lack of it in the bark paintings of that area.

[6] Mountford mentions only 7 artists by name (pp. 13-15) : but apart from the few references noted in that context (to the effect that 13 paintings and objects were made by 5 artists) throughout his volume there is no indication of the particular paintings or objects for which they were responsible. No illustration or description in this volume has attached to it the artist's name and his tribal or linguistic group (and/or clan) affiliations. This is a serious deficiency.

[7] Warner (1937) discusses many of the topics treated by Mountford under " Murngin Artifacts " (see Warner 1937 : 471-505).

[8] Elkin (1954 : Chapter IX).

[9] Elkin, R. and C. Berndt (1950) ; see particularly, in this context, Chapter I.

Hereafter this volume will be referred to as E., B. and B. : I shall refer to my own name and that of my wife in a similarly abbreviated manner—i.e., for R.B. read R. Berndt, for C.B. read C. Berndt, or R. and C. Berndt in combination as the case may be. Similarly, for M. read Moundford : unless otherwise stated, this will refer to the volume under review.

I should add that in our earlier works we employed the sounds *t–d, p–b, k–g,* just as we recorded them on the field : later we agreed with Dr. Capell that for the sake of consistency in publishing Aboriginal words it would be better to employ either the voiced or unvoiced consonants, preferably the former as a general rule.

[10] McCarthy (1948/1956 : with a foreword by A. P. Elkin : 7–9). Apart from general discussion, Arnhem Land is specifically dealt with (McCarthy 1948/1956 : 35–41) and a number of objects etc. illustrated. McCarthy's paper (1955 : 68–75) on Groote and Chasm Islands cave paintings, also, is not noted.

[11] H. Basedow (1925 : 297–358). Even though we may be critical of this volume there is no reason to ignore it in this context : specifically relevant are fig. 22, Plates XLVIII, XLIX.

[12] McCarthy (1957 : 3–22), (1958 : 45–53, figs. 25–32, 43–4).

[13] Also illustrated in R. and C. B. (1951 : Plate 18).

without obtaining permission from us to do so, and this is true for one illustrated in colour in his earlier volume.[14]

A further general point concerns the representativeness of the art objects illustrated in his volume. I am not in a position to discuss his Groote Eylandt section (2 : 19–106), and understand that Dr. Peter Worsley intends to do so.[15] As regards Western, North-Central and North-Eastern Arnhem Land (that is, the art of Oenpelli ; the art of Yirrkalla ; Carved and Painted Figures) it is quite inadequate. For Oenpelli there is an excellent selection of cave painting art,[16] but when it comes to bark painting and ceremonial objects there are some notable omissions[17] : and there is no mention of the moulded ochre heads from this region, which are quite interesting specimens of their kind.[18] For Yirrkalla, the bark paintings represent a fairly good coverage, but should be compared with those in E., B. and B. The major omissions relate to sacred objects,[19] love magic,[20] carved heads,[21] and particularly carved human figures,[22] which are poorly covered. (Mountford's volume provides me with an opportunity to record the fact that the outstanding Arnhem Land collections once stored in the University of Sydney's Department of Anthropology, for the Australian National Research Council, have now been dispersed, a large proportion going to Canberra, a passably representative selection to the Anthropology Centre of the University of Western Australia, and a certain amount to the Australian Museum, Sydney.[23])

A great deal of the volume under review consists of myths and stories , set out in conjunction with illustrations of bark paintings and of various objects. I shall purposely refrain from discussing mythology in this context, apart from a few comments. The procedure adopted by M. here is completely unsatisfactory. For instance, except for some casual references to ritual and ceremony, there is (as already noted), no key to the significance of mythology and the implications it may have in a social context. Instead, we are offered a motley of unrelated, disconnected and scrappy stories. Furthermore, they are so presented

[14] Mountford (1954 : Plate XXXI, which is our Plate 14 in E., B. and B. 1950, or Plate facing p. 110 in R. and C. B. 1952).

[15] See Review by P. M. Worsley (1957 : 186) ; reply by Mountford (1958 : 13) ; B. A. L. Cranstone supporting Mountford (1958 : 30) ; Worsley in answer (1958 : 80).

[16] But McCarthy (1957) has actually far more to say on cave painting art.

[17] See, e.g., E., B. and B. (1950 : Plates 15, 16, 17) ; R. and C. B. (1951 : Plates 1, 8, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24.)

[18] R. B. (1951*a* : 350–53, Plates 1–10).

[19] Warner (1937 : 497–503) ; E., B. and B. (1950 : 28–47) ; or the sacred *rangga* described in R. B. (1951*b*), (1952*a*).

[20] E.g., E., B. and B. (1950 : 84–91, Plates 18 A, 19 A and 19 B.).

[21] E.g , E., B. and B. (1950 : 58–60, Plates 3 B, 9) ; Jubilee Exhibition (1951 : coloured plate, p. 4).

[22] E., B. and B. (1950 : 48–60, Plates 1, 7, 8) ; R. and C. B. (1948 : 309–26, 2 plates illustrating 10 figures) ; R. B. (1948 : 93–103, 1 plate illustrating 2 figures) ; R. and C. B. (1949 : 213–22, 3 plates, illustrating 13 figures).

[23] Together with other objects formerly stored in that Department, they have gone on permanent loan to the above three institutions. I am concerned here with only the Arnhem Land collection built up by myself, and it seems to me that such dispersal represents a considerable loss to the Sydney Department, even though it is a decided gain to the other three bodies. So far only a relatively small proportion of it has been fully annotated and labelled. Although the majority of specimens are numbered, the full particulars are still to be found only in my field note books. Of the 51 carved human figures collected by R. Berndt at Yirrkalla in 1946–47, 18 have come to the University of Western Australia, together with an excellent series of Western and North-Eastern Arnhem Land bark paintings. (An exhibition of these was recently arranged by the University of Western Australia in conjunction with the W.A. Museum : see R. and C. B. 1957).

as to suggest that there is indeed only one " exact " or " correct " version of each myth and story, and that this is presented here. The fact that versions differ, not only regionally but individually, is a point which has escaped M. when considering the available material. However, the many stories that are given for Oenpelli and Yirrkalla are shortened versions, obviously lacking in many details, with the significance and/or interpretation in local terms not given, or not understood. The anglicized rendering of native names suggests that the hearer did not record phonetically, or hear correctly what was said, or know the linguistic background of the Aborigines with whom he has worked: many of the native names are almost unrecognizable. A striking example is the name " Unbalanja ", for Oenpelli (M. xii, xxviii, etc., etc.), which should of course be Gunbalanja (a place name having the class prefix *gun-* as in *gunwade*, " stone "). Similarly the spirits usually known as *namandi*, are referred to by M. (e.g., 130, 136, etc., etc.) as *mamandi*, without his realizing that in this case the *na-* is sometimes (although not always) treated as an ordinary masculine prefix, which changes to *ŋal-* when a female is specifically referred to, and may also alter to show the dual or plural. And " Mamaragan " should be Namargan, with the same masculine prefix. In the same way, Ŋaljot or Ŋaljod (M.'s " Ngaloit ") is referred to as if this were invariably a male rainbow-snake (M.: 212, 218), whereas in fact she is usually (though not always) regarded as a female: apart from the feminine prefix *ŋal-*, the pronouns (if I may call them by this term) used in reference to her, in the local languages such as Gunwiŋgu, make this quite clear. Again M. speaks of a mythical man named " Waraguk ", who finally (M.: 228) " transformed himself and his two relatives into the tall pillar known to the white man as Tor Rock and to the aboriginal as *Guruka* ". Had he listened more carefully, he would have realized that " Waraguk " and " Guruka " are, in fact, the same—Wuragag, who kept his name even when turned into stone.

But what is perhaps the most outstanding gap in this context is the failure to treat mythology in relation to art (i.e., beyond noting that the one illustrates certain features of the other), which has left us with a vague descriptive account. Regarding the mythology itself, only occasionally is Warner's work mentioned, while there is nothing to suggest that much of this material has been presented and discussed by Berndt: for instance, the Mimi[24] (M.: 181) and many others in this section;[25] " Ngaloit " (M.: 210)[26] or " Unjaut " (M.: 462–3); " Waraguk " and Tor Rock (M.: 227–28);[27] Balnuknuk (M.: 218) and the " Ubara " (M.: 454–60)[28], to mention only a few.

[24] See R. and C. B. (1951: 176–77), (1952: 109, plate facing); McCarthy (1957: 16–17).

[25] A relatively wide range of myths and stories is scattered throughout R. and C. B. (1951), which includes the majority of those noted by M. An almost complete series was obtained during the fieldwork of R. and C. B. in western Arnhem Land in 1947 and 1949–50. A great number of these myths were recorded in bark painting, and almost the whole of this collection is now in the Anthropology Centre of the University of Western Australia, being on permanent loan from the University of Sydney. Oenpelli was recently revisited by R. and C. Berndt this year (1958).

[26] Ŋaljot; see above: E., B. and B. (1950: 78–80), R. and C. B. (1951: e.g. 117, 121).

[27] Wuragag (or Wɔ:ragag), Tor Rock, is associated with the Fertility Mother, Waramuruŋgoindju: R. and C. B. (1951: 109–114).

[28] M. has a garbled version which is not associated with those usually termed sacred. His Balnuknuk is *balukluk* (*baluglug*), the sacred name for the dog which is sometimes called *djalaidj*: R. and C. B. (1951: 125). The wooden drum or " gong " is not " balnuknuk ". See E., B. and B. (1950: 9, 10, 33, 38, 39, 41), R.B. (1951*b*: e.g., 10). The *ubar* and Jurawadbad, with various versions and associated ritual, are discussed in R. and C. B. (1951: 114–38).

What I have said for Western Arnhem Land is even more noticeable for North-Eastern Arnhem Land (the Yirrkalla region), and here too the name Berndt is rarely conjured up except for the purpose of criticism.[29] Native words are consistently rendered unphonetically, and the initial ŋ which often occurs is rarely indicated. (For example, M.: 488 and 493, the moon-man's name is given as "*Alinda*", instead of *ŋalindi*—although a glance at the Methodist Mission hymn book would have indicated the correct name. On p. 278 the general term for the *julungul* python, *widid(j)*, is given as "*witik*"; on pp. 371 *et passim* the fresh-water tortoise, *minala*, is given *mimala*; on pp. 372 *et passim* the shark-name *manar* is given as *mana*—and so on.) The great myth-song cycles of the Djaŋgawul, or Djaŋ'gau (M. Djunkgao: 267–76), and the Wauwalag or Wauwalak (M. Wawalik: e.g. 278–9)[30] Sisters have been treated by me in two volumes (R. B.: 1951*b*, 1952*a*): the fragments which are given by M. are not at all satisfactory. And this is true for Laindjuŋ-Banaidja or Laintjuŋ-Banaitja (M. Laitjun-Banaitja),[31] the Thunder Man,[32] Woijal or Wudal (M.: Oijal: 289–92),[33] the Baijini[34] (M.: 333–38), Guldana, Gurgana, or Kultana[35] (M.: 338, 346), Burululurulu[36] (M.: Borolo-borolo: 341–43), Muraruma or Murəruma the 'Turtle' Man[37] (M.: Muruma: 299–301), etc., etc. There are so many points that could be commented on here, in terms of inaccuracies (not just differences in versions), that to do so is beyond the scope of this paper.[38] As Worsley has pointed out (1957: 241), "the errors, major and minor, are so numerous that it would take a book of comparable size to correct them."

[29] Such an example of deliberate disparagement occurs in M. (footnote 96: 95) concerning the availability of food during the wet season. He quotes from R. and C. B. (1951: 132) to the effect that the Rainbow Snake brings about the wet season and with it comes food in plenty. The wet season in Arnhem Land is not a time of scarcity—and people still move about in the 'wet'. It is true that certain foods are not available, but many others are, and there is no difficulty in obtaining more than an adequate supply of game and fish. It is not always raining, and the seas are not always rough during this season, as M. suggests. M.'s expedition did not spend a wet season in Arnhem Land. Also M. misquotes Warner, who stated (1937: 381): "Barra wind only brings nothing but rain and flood. After a while that rain brings fish in the lakes and rivers and makes the grass grow up for bandicoots to eat . . . and plenty of fresh tucker (vegetable food) for black men." In our reference we did not speak of 'plenty' or 'scarcity'; but we did say that the Rainbow Snake brought the rains and this in turn produced food in abundance.

M.'s suggestion that this is " . . . perhaps influenced by the 'earth-mother' cult of the agriculturist . . . " does not make sense in this context: he is obviously confused here with the early anthropological evolutionary approach, with its staging of cultures.

[30] M. remarks, surprisingly, that "The Wawalik myth appears to belong more particularly to the western side of Arnhem Land"—although in his treatment of the Oenpelli region there is nothing to support this claim. He means, presumably, central Arnhem Land— or the western side of the eastern *malarg* people.

[31] Banaidja is the son of Laindjuŋ, and not *vice versa* as stated by M. (279): see R. and C. B. (1948: 317–23) and elsewhere.

[32] Budŋu or Butŋu (M. Bolngo: 282–89); E., B. and B. (1950: 44, 67, 69), R. B. (1951*b*: 135).

[33] E., B. and B. (1950: 29, 106, 108), R. B. (1951*b*: 7).

[34] We have treated these people, tentatively, as belonging to a pseudo-historical period, prior to first Indonesian contact: see R. and C. B. (1949: 219–22), E., B. and B. (1950: a number of references), R. B. (1952*a*: e.g., 28), R. and C. B. (1954: e.g., Chapter 5).

[35] Ranjiranji is an alternative name for Guldana. M. treats Guldana as two men: see R. and C. B. (1948: 323–25), E., B. and B. (1950: e.g., 54, 58, 59).

[36] E., B. and B. (1950: 29, 41), R. B. (1951*b*: 7).

[37] R. and C. B. (1948: 325–26).

[38] It should be pointed out that R. and C. B. spent 1946–47 at Yirrkalla and some time at Milingimbi in 1950: nearly all the myths and stories recorded by M. in his volume have been collected by us in phonetic text, in various versions and in their song renderings. In addition the large selection of bark paintings mentioned above was collected. R. and C. B. also revisited Yirrkalla and Elcho Island this year (1958).

Before I deal with specific criticisms by M. of our work, I would like to draw attention to the paucity of general discussion and conclusions. He is persistent in using the term " primitive " which is gradually being discarded by social anthropologists. Australian Aborigines, we are told (M. : 6), paint because they want to (*sic*!) and not for some material advantage : their art is predominantly non-magical (although he gives many examples in which it is magical).[39] For the Arnhem Landers he roughly divides their reasons into four classes (M. : 6–7), one of which is that they paint in caves or on bark for sheer pleasure.[40] His conclusions to the Oenpelli art and myth section consist solely in descriptive art categorization, plus naïve comparisons with the art of prehistoric Europe and the African Bushmen (M. : 260–2).[41] The conclusions to the Yirrkalla section purport to sketch the relationship between social organization and design (M. : 405–9) : all that emerges, however, is reference to clan and linguistic group bark painting designs, which M. has now discovered (M. : 405). (He appears to be largely ignorant of the elements of social organization and structure.)[42] Here again (contrary to actuality) rigidity in interpretation of design-meanings is emphasized. The comments on the possible origin of such designs (M. : 409–10) are purely speculative (M. jumps at once to the 'explanation' of diffusion), although I would say there is a distinct possibility that Indonesia is the source of many of the clan and linguistic group designs used by the North-Eastern Arnhem Land Aborigines. M. concludes this section (M. : 410–11) with the statement that " all evidence suggests that many of the elements in the decorative north-eastern art are of recent origin " (the whereabouts of this evidence is not indicated, and it is not discussed), that Pobasso was the first Indonesian to visit the Arnhem Land coast (that is 20 years prior to meeting Flinders during 1803), and that no evidence exists to suggest prior alien influences.[43]

I now turn to some specific remarks. On page 111, Elkin, C. Berndt and myself are accused of an interest in the erotic, because we have noted what kind of paintings are to be found on the cave walls and roofs : we " casually mention " the range of these ; our " main interest appears to have been the eroticism of the cave paintings ", and we saw " little to interest " us in the many others. And mentioning two such paintings " of erotic significance " the " authors claim " (i.e., Elkin, Berndt and Berndt) that they were used in sorcery. I

[39] Contrast with McCarthy (1957).

[40] Although I held this view at one time, I am not now of that opinion.

[41] For instance M. (plate 52 B) shows a drawing of a man " Gadji-mungaini ", with protruding tongue : he suggests that this indicates this being talking (speculation), and that a comparison can be made with a drawing with a similar protruding tongue (symbolizing speech) in the Codex Mendoza (M. : Plate 53 F). Plate 26 C shows an Egyptian tomb painting, Plate 68 C a cave painting from Trois Frères—etc.

There are also some speculations concerning ' which came first '—and for M. the Mimi drawings take the lead, with "static" x-ray art overlaid (M. : 262). There are, so I understand, further drawings under the Mimi and the x-ray designs, but they are not mentioned by M. This is not a problem I shall consider here. See, however, McCarthy (1957 : 16).

[42] Cf. his reference (M. : 278, footnote 47) to *Kapin mata* (i.e. *mada*), whereas *Kapin* is a *mala* name : and (M. : 407) to the " *duralili* " *mata*, where probably the *Durili mala* name is intended. But see especially his remarks on page 409 : " The *djambarpingu mata* is an excellent example of how a *mata* (language group) spreads over a number of *mala* (clan groups). According to Warner, the *djambarpingu* language group includes the following adjacent clans or *malas* : *liagaomiv*, *djirin*, *gwiyula*, *djapu*, *naladaev* and *djawark*. Further research will, no doubt, reveal that this characteristic applies to a number of the language groups." Warner himself would probably be the first to admit that his statement as quoted here is in need of revision : but M. should have realized, if only from the name *Djabu* (*djapu*), that this list included *mata* names, which certainly do not come under the heading of " *djambarpingu* ".

[43] This has been treated in R. and C. B. (1954). I state simply that I am in disagreement with this.

don't want to respond to this sort of defamatory attack in the same vein, although I am surprised that M. should have gone out of his way to construct windmills of this nature to tilt at—and, in fact, at the general tone of this and similar comments, However, let me just say mildly that, in the first place, the remarks quoted are torn out of context : the drawings referred to came under a specific heading entitled " Sex and Magic ",[44] and the illustrations were so outstanding as to be dealt with separately. (There is nothing comparable in M.'s series, except the reproductions of cave paintings.) The very use by M. of the term " erotic " in this context (in spite of his own note 86 on page 343) suggests an attitude which is non-Aboriginal : it is so elastic as to include almost anything—women dancing, for instance, or a female giving birth to a child. Because M. did not explore the issues involved between bark and cave painting and sorcery, and in spite of his remarks on pp. 183, 263–4, he casts doubt on our data. There is no need for me to dwell on this point here. But I should say that apart from the above references to cave and bark paintings, many others have been made in the various works we have so far published :[45] we referred not only to the Araŋa (M. : 111, 140–41), but to the Mimi (M. : 112) and to x-ray designs. It is interesting, moreover, that M. should deny, without any supporting evidence, that " coupled human figures at Oenpelli " signify or symbolize coitus : " an examination of the figures will show that this is not so ", says M. (117 and footnote 21) : they are " inexplicable coupled figures " (!). Furthermore, M. says (123, note 23) that he was unable, " after many days of searching among the thousands of examples of cave art in the Oenpelli area, to find any of the cave paintings mentioned by Elkin and the Berndts which showed men and women in the act of coitus." It seems to me that M. is deliberately denying what is there, since I have seen many such figures, and these were interpreted by local Aborigines as referring to the sexual act. I don't think one need be prudish about this matter : M. has illustrated reproductions of cave paintings in his volume that refer to the sexual act. This is an aspect of human behaviour which interested these Aborigines just as much as it does most other human beings ; and to state, frankly, the Aboriginal interpretation in such cases is surely preferable to concealing or rejecting it.

Also illustrated in M.'s volume are cave paintings which refer to sorcery ;[46] these differ in design from those drawn for me on bark, although the artists insisted that such paintings were ' copied ' from the cave art : but the reproduced results differed considerably. I incorrectly used the word " replica " when " rendering " would have been more applicable. There is a question here not only of possible change of form etc. in the case of such " copying " but also of differences between artists : nevertheless those sorcery paintings and others mentioned by me[47] had their counterparts in the cave art—on this point I am quite firm,

[44] E., B. and B. (1950 : 80–1, plates 15 and 16), R. and C. B. (1951 : 206–10, plates 1, 8, 9, 21, 22).

[45] E., B. and B. (1950 : see particularly 76–80, 81–3 : in this vol. there are 19 references alone ; but see 109–10), R. and C. B. (1951), R. and C. B. (1952 : 105–6). We did not illustrate x-ray bark paintings in E., B. and B. because Spencer (1914 ; 1928) had presented some ; and this is true too for the wide range of sacred objects from Western Arnhem Land illustrated by Spencer. A large collection of both of these varieties was collected by B. The reason for our not using reproductions of cave paintings from Western Arnhem Land in our volume (E., B. and B. 1950) was (1) the limited scope of that work ; (2) our photographs were, we felt, not clear enough for satisfactory reproduction : we had no flash-bulbs, and used time exposure only for those paintings that were partially exposed. I have however visited a number of caves in this region, and again visited the caves at Oenpelli Hill near the Mission early this year (1958).

[46] Cf. the variety mentioned by E., B. and B. (1950 : 80–1), R. and C. B. (1951 : 206–10).

[47] I refer here to R. and C. B. (1951 : plates 1, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24), E., B. and B. (1950 : plates 2, 15, 16, 17).

and have evidence to substantiate my contention. (For instance, it was not our intention to convey that the contemporary drawing of Araŋa was *an exact copy* of the cave painting (Spencer, 1928, fig. 540 ; M. : 111, 140–41, plate 41, A., B. and C.—the latter being reproduced from E., B. and B. without permission) : there are wide differences, as M. correctly points out, but this bark painting was drawn to " represent " the cave painting ; and the latter is a representation of the malignant spirit Araŋa.[48] I have not ' interpreted ' the cave painting (the " appendage " of M. *is*, incidentally, a penis), but I have made a statement concerning the bark painting, and the information recorded was that which was supplied to me by the natives concerned.

On p. 194, note 85, M. appears puzzled about the significance of circumcision and sub-incision in this region : some information on this score, however, was accessible.[49]

The same pattern of either ignoring or disparaging the work of E., B. and B. and B.[50] in this region is apparent on p. 267, where this is contrasted with Warner's. On p. 269 M. mentions one volume (R. B., 1952*a*) in order to take issue with me on the name of the home of the Djanggawul (M., Djunkgao : 269, notes 15 and 16) : he states that it was not Bralku (or Bralgu) but Tjurinjina, some distance beyond. He then states that I correct my statement (E., B. and B., 1950 : 28 ; R. B. 1952*a* : 2), and that native informants " were definite " that the Djanggawul did not come from Bralku. This latter statement and my " correction ", says M., dispose of the evidence that this important Ancestral Being originated in the *dua* moiety home of the dead, Bralku (M. uses the ambiguous term " heaven ", which conveys quite a wrong impression), since this would have given rise " to a theory that the Aborigines of Yirrkalla believe in reincarnation " (!). M. is hopelessly confused, and I can only refer the reader to R. B. (1952*a* : e.g. 2, 24) and to emphasize that we are dealing with myth, not historically based and substantiated fact. I said there that the myth states, in several of its versions, that the Djanggawul were living at Bralku, *although* they had come from an unknown land : they are associated with Bralku and this mythical island was to become the home of the *dua* moiety dead. (M. did not, apparently, have the confidence of his informants, and moreover did not know any of the local dialects) : the name he gives is one of many place names on Bralku : his reference to " reincarnation " is a *non sequitur*, although there is evidence to support the contention that these North-Eastern Arnhem Landers believe in re-birth.[51] Even the characters in the Djanggawul myth were not clear to M. (p. 273, note 36) : he categorically states that there is no evidence that Bralbral was present :[52] he is even uncertain whether there were two sisters. On p. 423, note 33, M. states that I illustrated (in R. B. 1952*a* : 25) sketches showing the Djanggawul Brother and his Sisters with a long penis and elongated clitorises respectively, and that I did not give native drawings showing these same characteristics. Because his carved figures of the Djanggawul Brother and his younger Sister are shown without these features, the implication is that my account is in some way inaccurate, or that I took some perverse pleasure in forcing this interpretation on to the

[48] See E., B. and B. (1950 : 81–3) : the story of the original cave painting is told there : my choice of the word " replica " was, as I have mentioned above, ill-advised. See R. and C. B. (1951 : 170–76).

[49] See R. B. (1952*b* : 3–19, with plates), (1952*c* : 121–46).

[50] Three volumes by ourselves are not noted here : two are particularly relevant to his subject.

[51] See A. P. Elkin (1954 : 47–8, 144, 179, 303, 319).

[52] But see R. B. (1952*a* : e.g., 24, 31 *et seq.*).

material, even to the extent of composing my own drawings to substantiate it! But in my volume (R. B., 1952*a*), apart from sketch 1, page 25, I illustrated original crayon drawings showing these features (for example, Plate 11, p. 96; Plates 23, 24, p. 208 where the Djanggawul Brother and his two Sisters are depicted with elongated penis and clitoris), and discussed their significance. M. (423, note 35) also states that the Djanggawul Brother and his Sisters did not " sleep together " : they did nevertheless, in the myth, have sexual intercourse (numerous references in R. B. 1952*a*). He further notes (425, note 38), when referring to the Djanggawul " walking stick ", that " the aborigines did not state that it was associated in any way with the male sex organ ". All I can say here is that, to repeat, M. did not, apparently, have the confidence of his informants, did not obtain a sufficiently full description of his objects, did not use the native dialects, and was consequently not able to identify what he did get. There is reason to suppose that the gaps so very apparent here and elsewhere to those who know this culture and society are due to the fact that M.'s informants (who were, incidentally, among those I myself had) for various reasons " held back " information.[53]

(M. notes, p. 278, note 48, that the Wauwalak myth and its associated ceremonies have been " described and analysed in considerable detail by Warner " (1937), which is quite true : but that E., B. and B. make only a brief reference to this[54] and I " also " describe it.)[55]

The same carelessness and inaccuracy is apparent in M.'s notes on Laindjuŋ and Banaidja (M. : 279–82), and I have already commented on this. On p. 281, note 55 he informs us I mistakenly said that " to commemorate Banaitja " the people " made the ' likeness ' of Banaitja in paperbark, bound together on a framework of cane ". He continues that it would seem likely that I only *heard* about this bark bundle and consequently " gained a wrong impression of its appearance, and described it without having seen a specimen ". In R. and C. Berndt (1948 : 314), I mentioned that the ' murderers ' of Banaidja carved a representation of this Being " and also made a paper-bark *banaidja* pad which is beaten on the ground during sacred rituals ; and the sound of this is Banaidja's voice ". This *is* the " likeness " of Banaidja (see E., B. and B. : 31), and it is *also* a giant barramundi fish (R. and C. B. 1948, note 17). Not only have I seen these paper bark pad beaters used in the *jiridja* (or *jiritja*) *nara* ceremonies associated with Laindjuŋ and Banaidja, but specimens were in the Arnhem Land collection which I brought back to the Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney.[56] On p. 427, note 48, M. reveals his confusion concerning clans and linguistic groups. When we state that Manaidja (or Manaitja) is a clan, M. notes that we list this as a clan instead of a linguistic group, but that " this may be correct " (!). He does frankly state that his " knowledge of the *mata* (linguistic groups) and the *mala* (clans) is incomplete and confused ".[57] Nevertheless, on pp. 427, 429, notes 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, when discussing the meaning of clan designs, M. states that in R. and C. B. (1948) we gave one meaning, but E., B. and B. (1950) " correct this " and give another *different* meaning. Here again his ignorance of the significance of these linguistic group and clan designs is quite apparent : he does not apparently

[53] I have shown the connection between these " sticks " or *rangga* and, among other things, the male genitalia : see R. B. (1952*a* : 10–11, 26, 32 *et seq.*). E., B. and B. (1950 : 29). I was able to discuss all this with the same men during my recent visit to Yirrkalla.

[54] E., B. and B. (1950 : 32–33).

[55] See R. B. (1951*b*).

[56] See R. and C. B. (1948 : 314, note 18).

[57] Manaidja is a *mala*, clan, name : see E., B. and B. (1950 : 23), R. B. (1951*b* : 5).

realize that similar designs can have different meanings in different contexts, and that each linguistic group and clan has a series of designs or patterns. Both meanings *can* be correct. But further M. is confused, for in R. and C. B. (1948 : 318–20) we are giving the meaning of designs painted on a carved figure of Laindjuŋ, while in E., B. and B. (1950 : 22–24) we give the ' meanings ' of clan and linguistic group names, which are listed. The situations are different ; we are not dealing with the *same* thing. The fact that (e.g.) a linguistic group name can be translated as meaning something suggests that this has mythological associations, and usually does in North-Eastern Arnhem Land ; but the designs relevant to that group or the subject matter to which they refer may vary : the alternatives are not, as M. suggests, mutually exclusive : but there is a tendency to standardize patterns for specific clans and linguistic groups to which a range of meanings may be given.

On p. 323, notes 40, 42, M. now takes issue over the name of the *jiridja* moiety home of the dead which for brevity and convenience we called " Badu " in E., B. and B. (1950 : 54), identifying this with the Torres Strait Islands, but which he has called Nalkuma.[58] This latter name (really Ŋalgunmai) is one of the many names used to indicate various islands occupied by the *jiridja* spirits of the dead—see R. B. (1948 : 93–103, in which this name is given) : these are often collectively called " Badu ", a term which partly superseded the older and varied names.[59] It seems that M. does not realize that different names may be used (see M. : 441, note 84)— and this in itself shows his lack of acquaintance with the songs which embody the greater part of the mythology in this north-eastern part of Arnhem Land.

On p. 415 M. notes simply that we have " described wooden figures from Yirrkalla ",[60] and that these are to be contrasted with the " post figures " mentioned by Warner (1937 : 504)[61] and the Chaseling post-figure noted by M. (p. 417 and note 22 : Plate 138 C, D).[62] However, M. (416 and note 15) says their origin is " comparatively recent ", whatever that means. Mauwulan may have made the statement attributed to him, but that in itself does not rule out the possiblity of an earlier introduction.[63] In my opinion, and I mentioned this for what it is worth in R. and C. B. (1984 : 311) and R. and C. B. (1949 : 213) (since it is speculative), the post-figures are relatively " early " (possibly dating from first Indonesian contact—see R. and C. B. (1954), since they are so well integrated in North-Eastern Arnhem Land culture (and this is an indication) and because of the techniques involved). But, on the other hand, the carving of the complete figure as first recorded by Berndt is of ' recent '

[58] On p. 323, note 40 and p. 329 M. calls Turi-turi (Duriduri) a *dua* moiety spirit of the dead, while it is actually of the opposite moiety. He also states (note 42) that the Arnhem Bay *jiridja* moiety people have a different " heaven " from that of those at Yirrkalla, which is not so.

[59] M. mentions that this *jiridja* place of the dead is to the north and not in the direction of " Badu " (in Torres Strait) : this has been noted by R. B. (1948 : 98, 100), E., B. and B. (1950 : 54), R. and C. B. (1948 : 323), R. and C. B. (1954 : Chapter 9).

[60] I have already given references above to our publications concerning these figures. See L. Adam (1954 : 164).

[61] An original post-figure collected by Warner was in the Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney collection and has now come to the University of Western Australia on permanent loan.

[62] See reference by R. and C. B. (1949 : 213, and note 5), E., B. and B. (1950 : 48). At the time of writing we were unaware of the Chaseling post-figure.

[63] In discussing this with Mauwulan (*dua* moiety) during our recent (1958) visit to Yirrkalla, he does now hold that his father's father " invented " figure carving and handed down the art to himself : this is contrary to what he held during our fieldwork period of 1946–47. But it conflicts with the view held by Muŋgaraui (*jiridja* moiety), and by others, who insist that only those figures with legs and arms are of recent origin.

origin : it is rather an elaboration, as it were, of the post figures. M. mentions that Mauwulan carved " many of these wooden figures " for me. He certainly did carve several of them and the understanding was that they would eventually come to me, but a number of other artists were involved, as a perusal of the references will reveal.

On p. 418 M. states that small carved heads were carved for myself for the first time, and that our interest stimulated them to make more. This is entirely true, but what is untrue is that some of these were not distinguished as sacred and others secular ; and that some were not shown to postulants (M., note 25) : they were an innovation, but they were used for the purpose I stated in E., B. and B. (1950 : 58, Plates 3 B *a* and 9 *c* concerned Ancestral Beings and 9 *a* and 9 *b* historical personages).

M. states (p. 418) that our comments on the use of the sacred figures (see E., B. and B. 1950 : R. and C. B. 1948 : 313, 314, 324) are incorrect, and were denied by my own native informants. Nevertheless, as I have recorded, these were shown to postulants in my presence, like sacred *raŋga*. The Laindjuŋ, Banaidja, the Wauwalag Sisters and certain other carved figures were considered sacred : from the time these were made at Yirrkalla until the time they were taken away by me and shut securely in boxes, native women were not permitted to see them (although this is no actual criterion of their sacredness) : they were brought down to my camp in great secrecy and were wrapped up in bagging and cloth. Those that I have indicated as secular (e.g., those illustrated in R. and C.B. 1949, or E., B. and B. 1950 : plate 7 *a*, plate 8 *b*) were seen by all, and were used ritually in the way I have indicated.[64] The point missed by M. is that *irrespective of the figures themselves the actual designs painted on them are sacred*, and may be seen and treated only in a religious context : this is true too for ordinary Macassan-type pipes, which if incised with sacred clan and linguistic group designs are completely covered with bark or cloth. Returning to the figures, I would say that in the case I mentioned they took the place of or supplemented the use of *raŋga* poles and emblems : and this would possibly not usually be done, since the latter are the traditional vehicle.

It is really exasperating to find M. querying facts concerning the manufacture of these figures (p. 419) : the figures I obtained took approximately the time I mentioned to complete, and none were done in 7 hours (M. note 28). If I may be excused for saying so, it seems to me, looking at M.'s illustrations of his carved figures from Yirrkalla, that they were certainly done in haste. The tools I mentioned were used—first the axe, then the large knife or wide-bladed iron spear-point : then for finer work the smaller knife, and shark's skin " sandpaper " and rough stones to obtain smoothness. These are not " primitive " tools, and despite the fact that the Air Force base had only just closed down no wood rasps, files or sandpaper were used in the manufacture of the figures collected by me, although jungle knives and axes were plentiful, as well as nails, hammers and so on.

I have taken up a number of these points in some detail because M.'s volume is intended to be authoritative, and because (as so little is known of Australian Aboriginal art) it might easily pass as such.[65]

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[64] This latter aspect is hardly mentioned by M. (pp. 434, 435).

[65] This has occurred in the case of Levine (1957 : 951 *et seq.*), who states that it provides us " with a specific account of aboriginal art and belief in Arnhem Land which discriminates three artistic subcultures . . . and details the corresponding ideology ". M.'s volume does not, of course, do this, but Levine uses this and other material uncritically (e.g., Levine 1957 : 955 ; description of painting ; 961–2 reference to soles of the feet turned up to face the viewer).

Mountford went into the field well armed with information, which must have helped him considerably in his short visits to various parts of Arnhem Land ; but he should have realized that, while Warner's volume on the Milingimbi region has not been superseded, Warner's rendering of Aboriginal words is one of his weakest points. There is no excuse to-day for the inconsistent and garbled spelling we find in the Mountford volume.

If one were to assess this as an ' art book ', there could be nothing but praise for the superb illustrations—a field in which Mountford has always excelled. One can only regret that the text doesn't match : and this is all the more regrettable in the light of its claims to be a comprehensive, authoritative, and " scientific " study.

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Australia: Material Culture. **McCarthy.**

The Role of Australian Museums in Anthropology.[1] *By F. D. McCarthy, Dip.Anthr. Curator of Anthropology, The Australian Museum, Sydney.*

Museums in Australia came into existence under the principle established in Europe that collections of primitive man's crafts should be made for the public benefit and posterity. Early museum officers, two of whom were Directors, who took an interest in anthropology in Australia were either zoologists or palæontologists, such as Robert Etheridge and E. R. Waite, or individuals who just grew up with the subject in the museum. They did not form the core of the teaching staff nor were they trained as anthropologists at the universities, it being 1925 before the subject was established at Sydney for the first time in an Australian university. Anthropology thus had no real background as a profession in our museums until the present day curators began their work during the past thirty years. Their interests have been concerned more particularly with building up collections, research on archæology and material culture, together with display and educational work. The situation in Australia is thus completely different to that in the United States of America outlined by Collier and Tschopik in 1954, where the balance of influence in the teaching and theory of anthropology has shifted from the museums to the universities largely because new aspects of the science, which have not concerned museums greatly, have now become the major interests of graduates. As a consequence, the study of material culture, particularly since the functional school emerged, has become somewhat infra dig to the modern graduate. It is akin to the attitude of some zoologists to the systematic work performed by museums.

In Australia anthropology has always been grouped with zoology and geology in the natural history museums. Man is an animal, depending upon nature for his sustenance and raw materials, and the science which studies his origin, physical attributes and cultures has been grouped with zoology and geology, disciplines which are also involved in studies of man's food crafts and archæology. These museums not infrequently combine fieldwork in the three sciences. There are, therefore, strong traditional and practical grounds for continuing this association, but modern developments in anthropology, and the vast range of the science, now require separate museums of man, which have long been established in Europe. The Musée de L'Homme in Paris is a good example, and there are nine German and several American museums devoted to this science.

Anthropology today studies prehistoric, primitive and civilized man and their cultures, and the separation of the more recent activities of man in technological museums is no longer a valid practice in terms of modern anthropology. Today it is impossible to separate the primitive from the modern. Indonesia offers a good example. In these densely populated islands there exists a range of man's activities which embraces the primitive fisherman, the highly organised rice grower, and the modern industrialist and his era. Recently Indonesian visitors to the Australian Museum pointed out to me that we are no longer justified in showing the primitive side of their countrymen's life because they are now as civilized as any of the white nations. The same remark holds good, but to a lesser degree, for the American Indian, African Negro and other primitive peoples, and will soon apply to New Guinea. This situation

[1] Read at the symposium on "The Role of Museums in Science" held jointly by sections C, D, E, F and M at A.N.Z.A.A.S., Dunedin, January, 1957. Published by permission of the Board of Trustees of the Australian Museum.

suggests that our museums should illustrate in their exhibits this change in cultural standards from the primitive background of a people's life to their progress to modern standards of civilization.

In a museum of man the developments of transport, music, ceramics, implements and crafts of all kinds, and comparative exhibits of different periods in man's history, can be shown for the layman to see at a glance what history has to teach, instead of his being compelled to visit the natural history museum to see the work of primitive man and the technological museum to see products of modern civilizations. Thus from the educational and exhibition points of view, and equally well from the theoretical and functional aspects of anthroplogy, the logical development in the future is for museums concerned exclusively with man and his activities.

Now that we have dealt briefly with the place of anthropology in Australian museums, we can discuss collections, fieldwork and research in the present day picture.

Collections in themselves form a unit of scientific value that needs to be stressed whenever possible. They are the primary reason for the existence of museums whose obligations to make them as complete as possible, to preserve, display and carry out research on them must never be forgotten. Their value in anthropology as the work of primitive peoples, as objects of historical and comparative interest, and of modes of life which are rapidly disappearing, demand that museums fulfil these obligations to the best of their ability, as much for the value of the specimens as for their educational and scientific value.

A few words about the situation in Australia will be of interest. Prior to World War II the State museums concentrated on collecting material from Australia, accepting whatever came into their nets from Melanesia, Polynesia and elsewhere. Although their field of work has been more or less undefined, there is a feeling within the heart of some of their administrations that this field is really their own state, because their funds come from state governments. The other museums regard Australia as a whole as their field, and in anthropology the Australian Museum has featured Melanesia as a major region. In South Australia the most active and fruitful programme has been promoted in conjunction with the University of Adelaide and the Harvard University. This museum has built up the finest collection of Australian aboriginal material culture in existence by adopting a clear cut policy and furthering it at every opportunity. The value of this superb collection for study purposes cannot be over-estimated, and it represents well the scientific value of anthropological collections scientifically documented as a record of a people's way of life. No study of aboriginal material culture would be complete without reference to it. The other museums all possess valuable Australian collections, but their composition has not been planned on so comprehensive a scale as that of South Australia. There is still good material to be collected in north Queensland and Western Australia, for example, but the museums in these States have no anthropologists on their staffs, and thus valuable opportunities are being lost.

Now there is a moral to this story. We have at our front door the vast region of Melanesia from which rich and intensely interesting collections may be obtained, but none of the Australian state museums possesses either the funds of staff to finance such collecting nor the buildings to house the results. These museums have never sent an anthropologist to collect in New Guinea although they have received valuable collections made by zoologists in several localities, and Queensland possesses the Sir William McGregor collection from Papua. The

remarkable and colourful carvings, masks and ornaments of the Sepik and Maprik districts, outstanding examples of the material being let slip through our fingers, alone merit a special effort on the part of any of these museums.

Another aspect of this matter, alarming from the point of view of museums in Australia, is that there is now such a demand, with accompanying high prices, for New Guinea wood-carvings and art work, that traders, crocodile shooters and many other individuals are buying up (for a stick of tobacco in some cases) every example of this art that they can get to sell on the almost fantastic market for primitive art in the world to-day. The result is that there is not a carving left in some of the villages, and, as has happened in Africa, the art centres of New Guinea will be cleaned out of museum pieces in a very short time. To nurture this intensely interesting art of New Guinea and other islands, and to protect the natives from ruthless exploitation of their skills, it is desirable that local museums be established on the lines of those in Africa and other countries where similar problems have to be solved, and further, that some steps be taken to ensure that the native receives a fair price and preferably a definite percentage of the real value of his work. In Arnhem Land this return to the native is successfully handled by the missions, which retain only 10% of the market price of mats, baskets, bark paintings, etc., sold by them in the cities of Australia.

What, therefore, is the role of these museums in the study of Melanesian anthropology? Are they to adhere to their own state boundaries, limiting their research on Melanesia to specimens they are given or purchase, or are they to hope, at least, that they will be able to enter this rich but rapidly deteriorating field in the future? Theoretically, there is no doubt that the State museums of Australia should be making every effort to carry out such a programme but from a practical point of view the situation is, to say the least of it, difficult if not impossible of solution for them.

Let us face the facts. Three of these museums each have one anthropologist on their staffs, but the mass of routine work is more than enough for one officer to cope with, and makes it extremely difficult for him to carry out a planned project of field study and collecting in Melanesia. The other three State museums have no anthropologists. As funds from governments are limited, as well as staff, it appears that the most effective plan museums interested in Melanesia can adopt is to obtain funds from outside sources and then concentrate upon certain areas or islands to ensure that at least portion of the region will be dealt with effectively.

The study of communities in New Guinea has been carried out by social anthropologists from the universities, whose full time is taken up with lingustics, social structure, religion and acculturation problems. Few of them have made collections of material culture, and the cost of freighting specimens back to Australia has become too great an item to be covered by fieldwork expenses. In recent years, I am happy to note, the Australian National University scholars have made collections for deposit in Canberra, mostly from the central highlands of New Guinea.

This raises another problem. Much of this work in Melanesia could be done by a national museum (of anthropology preferably) at Canberra working in liaison with a properly established museum in New Guinea. The state museums, although conscious of the problem, appear to be leaving it to be solved in this manner. In whatever way the problem is solved, Australian museums should treate it as an urgent one before it is too late—already museums in Europe and the United States have obtained better collections from New Guinea than those in Australia.

Another research project awaiting exploitation by our museums in Australia is that of archæology. Throughout the continent lie prehistoric deposits awaiting the spade, and surface implements awaiting collection to complete distributional studies. Museums are the natural institutions to carry out the work. It would provide them with a programme of original research work quite as important in its own right as any anthropological work being carried out by the universities. Limitations of staff and funds, however, make it impossible for them to do so on a wide scale at present. Pioneering archæological work of great value is being done in several states, but none in others, and it is a field of outstanding interest and value for the museums to exploit. Museums and universities can work in co-operation on archæological projects, and museums can also work with members of local anthropological societies in this field.

I have outlined briefly the scope of anthropological work in Australia and Melanesia open to our museums. It is their role in anthropology to study in the field the manufacture, function and use of the specimens they house, and also to study the material culture of villages and local groups of natives to form a permanent record before it is too late to study such problems. It is from these studies that administrations seek guidance for preserving crafts or for substituting others to provide economic benefits to the people concerned.

The field of work of the museum anthropologist has been widened in recent years by political conditions. It is obvious that in the future, Australia will have much closer relationships with other Pacific countries, and Australians need a much wider understanding and knowledge of the peoples of Indonesia, south-east Asia, and also India, than is available to them at present. Quite apart from the present-day political and economic situation, the importance of Indonesia and south-east Asia in the prehistory of Australia and Oceania, forming as they have sources both of the peoples and of their cultural advancements and changes for thousands of years, points to the fact that we need in Australia collections from these regions as an essential background for the teaching of history in our universities and schools. The known cultural influences from Celebes, for example, should be documented by actual specimens in our museums which are, it appears, becoming too State-minded and parochial to give such important matters the consideration they deserve. Museums have an educational as well as a scientific role to play. Adequate scientific studies, and collections providing material for gallery displays, leaflets, booklets and lectures on Indonesia and south-east Asia would enable our museums to disseminate such information to the public, otherwise travelling exhibitions will have to take their place and these, being of a temporary nature, make a small impression upon the community as a whole.

The success of the education programme of a museum depends to a great extent upon its fieldwork, research and the comprehensiveness of its collections. It should inform the public on topical events. An excellent example is the Colombo plan. Our museums should be able to display the cultures of the south-east Asiatic countries concerned. Education officers need such exhibits to fulfil their taks in the education of school children in accordance with departmental curricula in which, it will be found, primary school children are taught simple things about the lives of peoples from all over the world, such as the food-gathering Eskimos and Australian Aborigines, the gardening Melanesians, the rice-growing Asiatics, the cattle-herding Africans, and so on. None of our museums possesses collections from all of these areas, but the National Museum of Victoria has reached a satisfactory compromise by using one of its

two anthropological galleries for Australian Aboriginal culture and the other for the primitive peoples of the world. The South Australian Museum has installed an Indonesian Hall, together with exhibits on the principal culture sequences of south-east and south-west Asia. The problem arises, of course, of educational functions taking too much of the time of the scientist in our museums, particularly when staffs are limited to one anthropologist. The role of museums in science, however, involves public education as well as research work.

Another vital task in anthropology today is for the museums to narrow the gap between their fields of work and those of the universities. This can be done by introducing exhibits on acculturation, social structure, genetics, to mention a few of the subjects which are now engaging the attention of specialists and of practically all graduates in anthropology. Exhibits illustrating the principles of the science, of physical anthropology, controversial problems like Polynesian migration, and primitive religions will interest the social and physical anthropologist in the work of our museums. But while anthropology is limited to one or two galleries in Australian museums, it is considerably handicapped in any attempt to carry out its wider scientific and educational functions, and in its efforts to satisfy the layman and attract the graduate. The museums, however, have a specialized field of anthropological study to follow which is of the utmost value in itself. It includes the biology and ecology of man, the origin, nature, growth and change in his cultures and the processes involved, the development of crafts and their local variations and archæology. Combined studies of these fields by specialists in physical anthropology, ethnography and archæology cannot be undertaken by our museums because they lack the staff necessary for the work. In a situation where primitive man's cultures are being replaced so rapidly by the white man's way of life, it is obvious that anthropologists should be appointed to all of our State museums and that they should be given facilities to carry out as much fieldwork as possible, particularly for the purpose of securing hitherto unrepresented collections. Anthropology is a career science today and anthropologists on museum staffs will have to be given equal field opportunities to gain higher degrees, and similar salary ranges to those of the universities before the museums can hope to recruit and to hold suitable graduates on their staffs.

It goes without saying that reference collections must be properly and conveniently housed to further research. Although a great deal has been done in some of our museums and the storage position is improving steadily, funds and staff are major difficulties everywhere.

The need for more funds to publish descriptions of collections also demands our attention. Throughout the world exist valuable and undescribed collections in museums which remain storehouses of specimens, unable for lack of funds to further their scientific and educational functions. It is a primary function of museums, and one of the most important problems facing them today, to publish catalogues of their collections for permanent reference. Specimens will not last for ever, insects destroy many, and wars do irreparable damage. Probably none of the Australian museums could finance the publication of such catalogues, which are needed for the Australian, Melanesian and Polynesian material in their collections. In fact, it is a major problem to get research papers requiring adequate illustration published because of the high cost of blocks. Increased government grants or outside funds would make it possible for such catalogues to be published.

In conclusion, I think everybody will agree that the museums of Australia are fortunate in having in their own country and neighbouring islands an intensely interesting field of study

and a rich source of collections. The museums have not taken advantage of this situation because they have always lacked the funds and staff to exploit it, but time is running out against them with the civilizing policies now being put into effect so rapidly among the natives of Australia and Melanesia. Unless the museums act quickly they will lose wonderful opportunities to secure collections and records of inestimable value.

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F. D. MCCARTHY.

CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES AND NEWS:

The Mountford Volume on Arnhem Land Art, Myth and Symbolism: A critical Review—A Rejoinder.

Sir,

I have just read Dr. Berndt's long, rambling and highly critical review of my book, " The Art, Myth and Symbolism of Arnhem Land ".

With great detail, and considerable personal disparagement of me, he has condemned the book for its lack of scientific approach, the limitations and distortions of its subject matter, and its paucity of references to the work of other investigators, particularly to that of himself and his collaborators. All these supposed defects are dealt with at great length, with copious references to his own opinions, his own, but no one else's publications, and to denials, or justifications of mistakes which I claimed he had made. Any mention of the value of my book is limited to a minimum of remarks regarding the quantity and quality of the illustrations.[1]

I am content to leave the assessing of the authenticity of my data, and my personal integrity as an investigator to those scientists who, in the future, will work in the same field as I have done; but I should like to deal with some of the other accusations.

Regarding my lack of references to other research workers, I find that I have specifically mentioned the work of Elkin and the Berndts fifty-four times, while in the bibliography of ninety-four references, I have listed twelve of their publications. To Warner's famous work on the ceremonial life of Arnhem Land, which has not been, and probably never will be equalled, I have made sixty-three references. I admit having missed Dr. Berndt's paper on the ochre heads, but then, who would think of looking for an anthropological paper on that subject in a literary journal?

It was quite unnecessary for me to " pirate " any of Dr. Berndt's illustrations. I had more than enough. I did use an illustration from Elkin and the Berndts' " Art in Arnhem Land " as a comparison against a certain cave painting to which they had referred, but gave full acknowledgement to its source. The other illustration which I was accused of " pirating " was made from a bark painting sent to Paris by Professor Elkin, and used in the UNESCO book " Australia, Aboriginal Art, Arnhem Land ".

Commenting on the reviewer's lengthy criticism of native words I would point out that because the book is an art book, I purposely used a broad transcription. But this simplification of native words only

[1] Interspersed in this mass of criticism and self-justification is an attack on another author (unrelated to the book), a complaint about the dispersal of his Arnhem Land collection of aboriginal art, about press reporting and other irrelevant matters.

suggests a difference of approach; it does not imply that, in the matter of spelling, either Dr. Berndt or I must necessarily be wrong.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Berndt wasted so much of his valuable time, as well as the funds and space of "Mankind" in reviewing my book from entirely the wrong angle, that of the social anthropologist. Had he paused to look at the title, he would have noticed that it was not a book on social anthropology, but on *Art*; the art of the aborigines of Arnhem Land, the symbolism they employ in that art, and the myths illustrated by those symbols.

In this book I have illustrated about seven hundred and fifty cave paintings, four hundred bark paintings, one hundred and ten carved and painted figures, eight waxen figures, thirteen engraved message-sticks and an equal number of engraved smoking pipes, all of which were collected on the Arnhem Land Expeditions.

The book was written to record permanently this large and valuable collection. The cave paintings I have described are remote and inaccessible, while collections are so often dispersed, sometimes without being annotated, or even numbered, a fate which Dr. Berndt admits has already befallen his Arnhem Land collection of eleven years ago.

I am well aware that eight months in three camps, with the leadership of a large and complex expedition occupying most of my time, did severely limit the depth of my research, even though the frequent change of camp provided me with a wide area over which to work. Nevertheless, the volume, under review, is by far the most extensive record of aboriginal art, and its significance, yet to be published. Still, I sincerely hope that before the people of Arnhem Land have lost their culture, other scientists, specifically interested in the art of the aborigines, will visit Arnhem Land, and investigate, more fully than I have been able to do, the art of those people, and the relationship of that art to both their social structure and their daily life.

CHARLES P. MOUNTFORD

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Dept. of A. & A.

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